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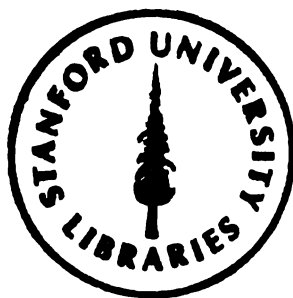
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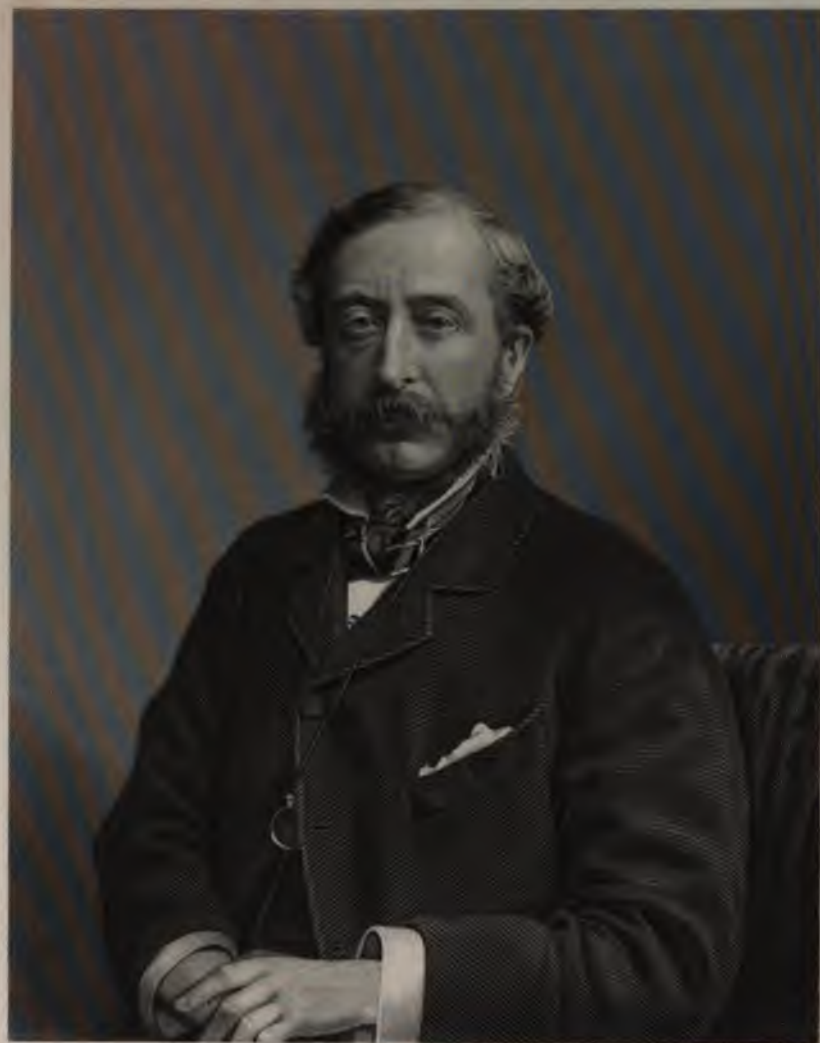
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RIGHT HON. HENRY-HOWARD-MOLYNEUX HERBERT,
EARL OF CARNARVON.

THE
RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,
AND HIS TIMES.

BY
ALEXANDER CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A.,
AUTHOR OF "SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY;" "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PRINCE
CHARLES STUART;" "REPRESENTATIVE STATESMEN," ETC., ETC.

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DUKE OF ABERCORN, K.G.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW.



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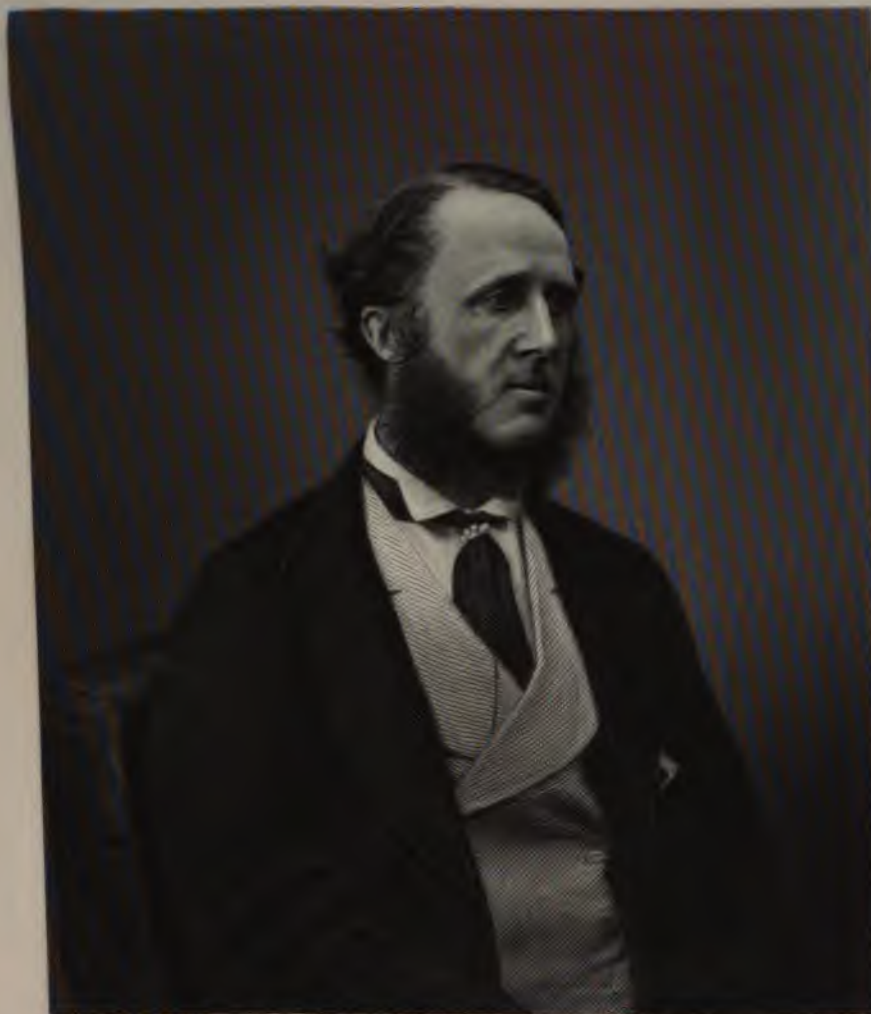
DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, K.G.

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WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW.



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RIGHT HON. JAMES LOWTHER, M.P.

high elevation, sometimes breaking into gorges and ravines which appeared unfathomable. Yet over this country, for more than 300 miles, he guided and sustained a numerous host—many thousands of fighting men, as numerous a following of camp attendants, and vast caravans of camels which in number exceeded both. He led cavalry and infantry over this country; and, what was perhaps the most remarkable part of this expedition, he led the elephants of Asia, bearing the artillery of Europe, over African passes which might have startled the trapper and appalled the hunter of the Alps. When he arrived at the place of his critical rendezvous, he encountered no mean foe; and if the manly qualities of the Abyssinians sunk before the resources of our warlike science, our troops had still after that engagement to scale a mountain fortress of such intrinsic strength that it would have been impregnable to the world had it been defended by the persons who assaulted it. But all these difficulties and all these obstacles were overcome by Sir Robert Napier, and that was accomplished which not one of us ten years ago could have fancied even in his dreams, and which must be peculiarly interesting to Englishmen under all circumstances to recall to mind—the standard of St. George was hoisted on the mountains of Rasselas.*

After commenting in eulogistic terms upon the military qualities of Sir Robert Napier, and upon the courage and endurance exhibited by the other officers engaged in the expedition, Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—"When it was first announced that England was about to embark on a most costly and perilous expedition merely to vindicate

the honour of our sovereign, and to rescue from an unjust but remote captivity a few of our fellow-subjects, the announcement was received in more than one country with something like mocking incredulity. But we have asserted the purity of our purpose. In an age accused, and perhaps not unjustly, of selfishness and a too great regard for material interests, it is something in so striking and significant a manner for a great nation to have vindicated the higher principles of humanity. It is a privilege to belong to a country which has done such deeds. They will add lustre to the name of this nation, and will beneficially influence the future history of the world." The vote of thanks was then unanimously passed.

Among the measures which almost silently, so absorbing was the interest in Irish matters, became law during this session the following are the most important:—The work of parliamentary reform was completed by extending the franchise and enlarging the basis of representation in Scotland and Ireland; in the drawing up of both these reform bills the Opposition played an important part, and the government on more than one occasion was forced to accept the suggestions of their opponents. The boundaries of boroughs in England and Wales were defined by a boundary bill which, after much discussion, passed both Houses. The bill which had been discussed last session with regard to the trial of election petitions by the judges of the land was now enrolled upon the statute-book. The long-contested church-rate question was settled by the bill founded on Mr. Gladstone's scheme abolishing the compulsory payment of church rates; and, lastly, a bill was introduced and became law which transferred all the electric telegraphs in the kingdom to the state.

Shortly before the dissolution of parliament Mr. Disraeli made a speech out of doors which attracted much attention, and led to some little discussion in the House of Commons. At a banquet in Merchant Taylors' Hall the prime minister spoke

* This sentence was much ridiculed at the time. As if, it was said, Johnson when he wrote *Rasselas* ever thought of an actual Abyssinia! The probability is that when Johnson wrote *Rasselas* he did think of and describe an actual Abyssinia. The country of Abyssinia was familiar to him. When an undergraduate at Pembroke he had read a "Voyage to Abyssinia," by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit, and subsequently had translated it. (See "Boswell," vol. i. p. 58; vol. iii. p. 7.) The heights on which "the standard of St. George was hoisted" were no doubt accurately described by Johnson in his novel, and might therefore with perfect consistency be styled by Mr. Disraeli as "the mountains of Rasselas."

upon his favourite subject, and which was all the more his favourite since the principle was now endangered, the union of church and state. "The constitution of England," he said (June 17, 1868), "is not a paper constitution. It is an aggregate of institutions, many of them founded merely upon prescription, some of them fortified by muniments, but all of them the fruit and experience of an ancient and illustrious people. And the consequence of this peculiar constitution has been this—one experienced by no other European nation—that in England society has always been more powerful than the state; for in moments of difficulty and danger, in moments of emergency, there has always in this country been something round which men could rally, and by those means we have achieved the two greatest blessings of civilized communities, which are seldom reconciled—the enjoyment alike of order and of liberty. Now, among these institutions not the least considerable is the church; and it is in the alliance between church and state—an alliance between equal and independent powers, which entered into a solemn covenant for the national good—that one of the principal causes may be recognized why we have enjoyed those two great blessings of freedom and order. To that union we are indebted for this great result, that the exercise of authority in England has been connected with the principle of religion—a union which, even in rude times, made power responsible, and which prevented government, even in comparatively barbarous periods, from degenerating into mere police, a union which in happier times has elevated, and purified, and ennobled the exercise of power. And, my lords and gentlemen, in the age in which we live, the duties of government each year become more social than political. I am at a loss to know how these duties can be fulfilled if the state be not in intimate relation with an order of men set apart, and who, by their piety, their learning, and their social position, not only guide and control,

but soften and assuage, the asperities of conflicting creeds."

Then directing the attention of his audience to foreign affairs, Mr. Disraeli passed upon the foreign policy of the late government this severe stricture. "When we acceded to office the name of England was a name of suspicion and distrust in every court and cabinet. There was no possibility of that cordial action with any of the great powers which is the only security for peace; and, in consequence of that want of cordiality, wars were frequently occurring. But since we entered upon office, and public affairs were administered by my noble friend [Lord Stanley] who is deprived by a special diplomatic duty of the gratification of being here this evening, I say that all this has changed; that there never existed between England and foreign powers a feeling of greater cordiality and confidence than now prevails; that while we have shrunk from bustling and arrogant intermeddling, we have never taken refuge in selfish isolation; and the result has been that there never was a government in this country which has been more frequently appealed to for its friendly offices than the one which now exists."

This criticism was not to pass unchallenged. A few days after these remarks had been delivered Mr. Grant Duff called upon the prime minister to explain his "wild words," and to prove how Lord Clarendon, who during part of the rule of the late government presided at the foreign office, had been "that troubler of Israel whose designs, whose machinations, whose un-wisdom were such that cordial co-operation between the great powers of Europe was rendered wholly impossible?" In reply Mr. Disraeli said (June 25, 1868) that his observations did not apply to Lord Clarendon, who had only succeeded to office for a few months, and therefore could not be responsible for a system which had unfortunately prevailed for many years, but to Earl Russell. He maintained the truth of his remarks. "As I am asked," he said,

"I must state without any equivocation whatever that what I said at the meeting in the city expresses the literal truth. I believe that for five, six, or seven years, dating from the period when a nobleman, once a distinguished member of this House [Lord John Russell], took the management of foreign affairs in 1859, they were conducted, to use one of his own famous expressions, as they seldom have been since the accession of the house of Hanover." After a few words from Mr. Gladstone objecting to the tone of "inflated and exaggerated eulogy" which Mr. Disraeli had employed to describe both himself and his policy, the subject dropped.

On the eve of the prorogation Mr. Disraeli, at a banquet at the Mansion House presided over by the lord mayor, again (July 29, 1868) addressed a few words to the country. He spoke of the activity of the session and of the various new measures that had been enrolled upon the statute-book. He congratulated his audience upon the friendly relations which existed between England and all foreign powers. But it was his remarks upon the burning question of the hour, the approaching general election, which were listened to with the deepest attention. "It is impossible," he said, "not to be sensible of the great occasion which is now at hand. I think he would not be a wise man, who for a moment would attempt to speak of that occasion in other terms than those which would do justice to its magnitude. But we have been told, in the course of the struggle of the last two years, that the confidence we reposed in the great body of the people was misplaced, and that the moment they possessed the power of the suffrage we should find them giving rein to the wildest ideas, and evidencing that they meant to exercise that power in a manner most dangerous to the institutions of the country. I confess I see no evidence before me which would justify this suspicion. On the contrary, I believe the great body of the people are prepared to exercise the

power with which they have been invested in a spirit of prudence and patriotism. When I remember what the constitution of England is—that the constitution of England proposes to itself two great objects, to maintain at the same time political liberty and religious freedom—I have no doubt that the English people, who will thoroughly understand the issue at stake and what is involved in it, will behave in the manner that becomes the descendants of a great people, and will prove that they are worthy of the privileges which the present generation has generously and wisely bestowed upon them. Therefore, instead of feeling any apprehension of the issue which the people of the country are called upon to decide, I must express my opinion, knowing how high and how deep the interests affected are, that the decision is safer in their hands than it would have been in a more contracted circle, probably of a more refined and educated character. Over-refinement and over-education lead very often to a perversity of opinion and an affectation of philosophy that do not deal with those vigorous and robust principles upon which the nation is now called upon to decide with the success and completeness which attend an appeal to a larger and more national constituency." We shall see how this confidence was justified.

Parliament was prorogued July 31, 1868, and the queen's speech was read by commission. After alluding to the bills that had received the royal assent, to the peaceful condition of Europe, the success of the Abyssinian expedition, and the restoration of comparative quiet to Ireland, the speech thus concluded:—"It is my intention to dissolve the present parliament at the earliest day that will enable my people to reap the benefit of the extended system of representation which the wisdom of parliament has provided for them.* I look with entire confidence to their proving

* Arrangements had been made by which the elections under the new law might take place in the autumn, so that the new parliament might be enabled to hold a short session before the expiration of the year.

themselves worthy of the high privilege with which they have thus been invested, and trust that, under the blessings of Divine Providence, the expression of their opinion on the great questions of public policy which have occupied the attention of parliament and remain undecided, may tend to maintain unimpaired that civil and religious freedom which has been secured to all my subjects by the institutions and settlements of my realm."

And now began the canvass for the most remarkable general election that had taken place since the election consequent upon the passing of the first reform bill. The country was divided into two distinct camps, and the battle-cry was clear and unmistakable. Was the Irish Church to be severed from the state, or was it to be maintained? That was the all-important question, and to that issue party hostilities had now been narrowed. Around Mr. Gladstone were those who advocated his policy simply because it was his policy, the Nonconformists who hoped that the downfall of the Irish Church would be the precursor of the overthrow of the Church of England, the Papists who saw the prospect of further advantages to Ireland and to the increase in the influence of their church, and the men who, regarding all religion as a detestable superstition, were only too glad to have an opportunity of making an attack upon any distinct creed. Among such company did the once vehement defender of the alliance between church and state now find himself. Around Mr. Disraeli were rallied the Anglican clergy *minus* the disloyal and schismatic ritualists, the landed gentry who ever in the hour of her extremity had rallied to the defence of the church, the more respectable class of manufacturers and tradespeople who were averse to government being freed from the restraints of religion, and a few, a very few, of the Liberal party who openly and disinterestedly disapproved of the tactics of their leader, and gave their vote against spoliation and a form of rule which, if

carried out to its logical conclusion, would be degraded into "a mere question of police."

The interval between the prorogation of the old parliament and the time appointed for electing the new was busily employed by both parties in the prosecution of their canvass. Mr. Gladstone was the first to throw himself into the contest, and to sound the trumpet which was to cause the walls of the Irish Church to fall down. "You cannot amend the church," he cried to his constituents in his electioneering pilgrimage throughout Lancashire, "in one respect or direction without offending in some other respect or direction, and making the case worse than before. The reason of it is that there is no basis. It is wholly disabled and disqualified for performing the purposes for which it exists; and consequently I spoke in literal truth, and not in mere sarcasm, when I said, 'You must not take away its abuses, because if you take them away there will be nothing left.' " "Let us make a new treaty," said Mr. Bright in Limerick, the city of the violated treaty. "Let us make a new treaty—not on parchment, not bound with an oath. Its end should be this—justice on the part of Great Britain, forgiveness on the part of Ireland. It shall be written in the heart of three nations, and they would pray to the common Father of all, in whose hands were the destinies of nations and of states, that He would make it last for ever and ever." Other prominent Liberals addressed their constituents in similar terms, and the election fever reached its height when in the second week of November a proclamation was issued for dissolving the present parliament, and ordering the writs for a new one to be returnable on the tenth of December next.

Mr. Disraeli had taken matters more calmly than his rival. It had been an unusually hot summer, and the prime minister had been content to pass the months of August and September quietly at Hughenden, trimming his roses, and

amusing himself by reading the comments of hostile newspapers on his appointment of Lord Mayo as governor-general of India, and his recommendation of the Marquis of Abercorn for a dukedom. He did not issue his address to the electors of Buckinghamshire until the first day of October. In that document he laid down the course he would pursue. Mr. Gladstone, he said, had seized the occasion of an expiring parliament to recommend a change of the fundamental laws of the realm, and to propose a dissolution of the union between church and state; to such a policy the government would offer an uncompromising resistance. He entered upon a comprehensive view of the conduct of affairs since the accession of the Conservative government to office in 1866. His policy had been distinctly that of Lord Derby, with whom he had worked in unbroken harmony for twenty years. Parliamentary reform, which "had embarrassed and enfeebled several administrations," had been satisfactorily settled, "broad in its principles, large and various in its provisions, but, as we believe, in unison with the character of the country, and calculated to animate the spirit of the community and add strength and stability to the state." The matter of Abyssinia, that "legacy of insult and difficulty," had been victoriously ended. With regard to naval and military subjects, "The strength of the navy was materially increased, the defences of the country much advanced, the soldier admirably armed, and enlistment become so popular that, not only is the voted number of our forces no longer in arrear, but many thousand veterans who were about to claim their discharge have remained in the army. Such great results have, of course, not been obtained without an increase of our expenditure, but the expenditure has been an object of the first necessity; and while it has been defrayed without adding to our taxation, it has entailed no burden on posterity." Fenianism had also been practically crushed,

and it was the earnest wish of ministers to do full justice to Ireland.

The address then concluded in the following words:—"In this state of affairs we had reason to hope, and it was generally contemplated by the country, that we might have tranquilly wound up the business of the session, and then asked, according to the provisions of the great statute which we had just passed, the public verdict on our conduct. Had it been propitious we might, by the favour of the sovereign, have continued to serve Her Majesty and enjoyed an opportunity of effecting those legal and social improvements which are so much required, and to the necessity of which we had proved we were not insensible. Had the verdict been adverse we should have retired from office without a murmur, conscious that when we had the opportunity we endeavoured to do our duty, and still prepared, as representing one of the great parties of the state, to co-operate with our rivals in public life for the public good. This, the natural current of events, was to be interrupted. The leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons seized the occasion of an expiring parliament, which had proclaimed its inadequate representation of the country, to recommend a change of the fundamental laws of the realm and to propose a dissolution of the union between church and state. Her Majesty's government offered and will offer to this policy an uncompromising resistance. The connection of religion with the exercise of political authority is one of the main safeguards of the civilization of man. It instils some sense of responsibility even into the depositories of absolute power. But under any circumstances the absence or the severance of such a tie will lower the character and duties of government and tend to the degradation of society. But it is urged that in the present instance the application of the new policy is only to be partial, and that only one portion of Her Majesty's dominions—Ireland—is for the present to be submitted to the revolu-

tion; and on this plea that in Ireland the members of the established church form only a minority of the population. If this numerical test is to be accepted, its application cannot be limited to Ireland; and if in a country of entire toleration a local instead of an imperial gauge be adopted, the religious integrity of the community will soon be frittered away. Instead of Ireland being made an exception to the fundamental condition of our constitution, there are many secondary reasons why the established church should be maintained in that country. Its subversion would aggravate religious hostility and party rancour; would suppress a resident class of men whose social virtues are conducive, as all agree, to the welfare of the country, and would further diminish the security of property in a land where its tenure and enjoyment are not as unquestioned as they have hitherto been in other parts of Her Majesty's dominions. But even in Great Britain the spoliation of the Church of Ireland would not be without its effect. *Confiscation is contagious; and when once a community has been seduced into plunder, its predatory acts have seldom been single.* There are, however, weightier reasons why this new policy should be resisted. The religious liberty which all Her Majesty's subjects now happily enjoy is owing to the Christian Church in this country having accepted the principles of the Reformation, and recognized the supremacy of the sovereign as the representative of the state, not only in matters temporal, but in matters ecclesiastical. This is the stronghold of our spiritual freedom. So long as there is in this country the connection, through the medium of a Protestant sovereign, between the state and the national church, religious liberty is secure. That security is now assailed by various means and on different plans; but amidst the discordant activity of many factions there moves the supreme purpose of one power. The philosopher may flatter himself he is advancing the cause of enlightened pro-

gress; the sectarian may be roused to exertion by anticipations of the downfall of ecclesiastical systems. These are transient efforts; vain and passing aspirations. The ultimate triumph, were our church to fall, would be to that power which would substitute for the authority of our sovereign the supremacy of a foreign prince, to that power with whose tradition, learning, discipline, and organization our church alone has hitherto been able to cope, and that too only when supported by a determined and devoted people."

Unlike Mr. Gladstone, who found that after a few years every constituency which he represented had become wearied and disgusted with that development of his political views which to the ordinary mind appeared like the grossest inconsistency, and consequently declined to return him, the prime minister knew that his seat was assured, and that he need not trouble himself in the matter. On Lord Mayor's day he came up to town, and was vociferously cheered at the Mansion House banquet when he replied to the toast of Her Majesty's ministers. He referred to the reform bill, and gave it as his opinion that the measure would work satisfactorily. Alluding to the desire for spoliation with which the political atmosphere was charged, he begged the city of London to recollect that, as owners of property, they were interested in maintaining the rights of property. The relations between France and Prussia were at that time much strained; and as Lord Stanley had been successful in arranging the dispute with America as to the *Alabama* claim, the prime minister suggested that the rival powers would do well to invoke the aid of the English foreign secretary to settle their differences. As to the result of the general election he had no fear. His opponents were very confident and very arrogant. "But I have never," he said, "found boastfulness and braggadocio of the slightest utility. Our opponents, indeed, have settled everything. They have exhausted all the arts of unanimous audacity.

But I think I have read somewhere that it is the custom of undisciplined hosts on the eve of a battle to anticipate and celebrate their triumph by horrid sounds and hideous yells, the sounding of cymbals, the beating of drums, the shrieks and springs of barbaric hordes. But when all has occurred, it is sometimes found that the victory is not to them, but to those who are calm and collected: the victory is to those who have arms of precision, though they may have made no noise—to those who have had the breechloaders, the rocket-brigade, and the Armstrong artillery." He was not intimidated, and he humorously concluded by hoping that when next year he should be called upon to return thanks for the cabinet, his observations on the political situation might be remembered.

Mr. Disraeli again alluded to the political situation on the day of his election (November 19, 1868). He claimed credit for passing the reform bill, he praised the diplomatic skill of Lord Stanley, he defended the expenditure of the government, and he deprecated the haste of Mr. Gladstone in dealing with the question of the Irish Church. Turning to foreign affairs, he asserted that when Lord Derby came into office, thanks to the policy of Earl Russell, England found herself estranged from France, Germany, and Russia. Her relations "were relations of courtesy, but not of confidence." Happily confidence and sympathy now reigned in the stead of the results of the Russell foreign policy. "All our interests," said Mr. Disraeli, "lie in the preservation of the peace of Europe; and we value our influence, because by using it we believe we can assist in the maintenance of that peace." As to Fenianism, he stated what he had always maintained, that it was a plant of foreign growth, and arose out of the American civil war. "In America," he said, "where a great many military men were Irish—and the Irish are a valorous and adventurous people—they had acquired great skill and experience, and they knew that in Ireland there

is always a degree of morbid discontent which they believe they might fan into flame, and which might lead to the revolutionary result they desired. The whole nature of the race will account for it. *An Irishman is an imaginative being. He lives on an island in a damp climate, and contiguous to the melancholy ocean.* He has no variety of pursuit. There is no nation in the world that leads so monotonous a life as the Irish, because their only occupation is the cultivation of the soil before them. These men are discontented because they are not amused. The Irishman in other countries, where he has a fair field for his talents in various occupations, is equal, if not superior, to most races; and it is not the fault of the government that there is not that variety of occupation in Ireland. I may say with frankness that I think it is the fault of the Irish. If they led that kind of life which would invite the introduction of capital into the country, all this ability might be utilized; and instead of those feelings which they acquire by brooding over the history of their country, a great part of which is merely traditionary, you would find men acquiring fortunes, and arriving at conclusions on politics entirely different from those which they now offer." Mr. Disraeli was elected without opposition.

The sanguine predictions of the prime minister as to the result of the elections were not to be fulfilled. In spite of certain prominent reverses, the tone of the country was adverse to the maintenance of a Conservative cabinet. In the English counties the Conservatives, as a rule, headed the poll; but in the boroughs the Liberals, with scarcely any exceptions, added largely to their majority. Scotland and Ireland were also the opponents of the Conservative policy. Several important reverses, however, occurred, which afforded no little consolation to the depressed Conservative interest. Mr. Gladstone was rejected by South-west Lancashire, and had to take refuge in Greenwich; the successful candidates being Mr. Cross, afterwards the ablest

home secretary who has ever held the seals, and Mr. Turner. Indeed Lancashire proved its loyalty to the government in no undecided fashion. In spite of his strong family interest, the Marquis of Hartington failed to win the honest Lancashire vote in the northern division, and was defeated by a son of Lord Derby. For the north-eastern and south-eastern divisions the returns were all Conservative. In Radical Manchester a Conservative headed the poll; whilst Salford, Preston, Blackburn, and Bolton returned two each; Ashton, Clitheroe, and Staleybridge one each—the total being twenty-one Conservatives against eleven Liberals for the county and boroughs. Still, in spite of these and other triumphs, the general policy of the country was markedly in favour of the Liberal cause. The following shows the total number of votes recorded on each side, with the Liberal balance:—

	Liberal vote.	Conservative vote.	Liberal majority.
England & Wales,	1,231,450	824,056	407,393
Scotland,	123,410	23,391	100,019
Ireland,	53,379	36,083	17,297
	<hr/> 1,408,239	<hr/> 883,530	<hr/> 524,709

Two hundred and twenty-seven persons, who had no seats in the House of Commons at its dissolution, were returned to the new parliament. On the other hand, many well-known members were excluded from the walls of St. Stephen. On the House assembling the eye looked in vain for the familiar faces of Lord Hartington, Roebuck, Bernal Osborne, Milner Gibson, Horsman, Sir John Karslake, Baron Rothschild, Mill, and others. The prophecies of Mr. Lowe and those who thought with him that the reform bill would lead to an invasion of the constitution by the working man and by demagogues of a revolutionary stamp, were completely falsified. Without an exception, whenever during the general election the candidate of the working classes presented himself, he was ignominiously defeated.

The prime minister had appealed to the country, and the verdict had gone against him. To continue in office with an Opposition which would be supported in the new parliament by a majority of over a hundred was out of the question. Two alternatives presented themselves to the mind of Mr. Disraeli. Should he meet parliament and court inevitable defeat? or should he bow to the feeling of the country, so plainly expressed, and resign at once? He decided upon the latter course. "If parliament were sitting," he wrote in the circular which he addressed to his supporters in both Houses (Dec. 2, 1868), "I should not have adopted this course; but as the public acts of a ministry should not be misunderstood, and as there are no other means of explaining their motives, I have taken the liberty of thus addressing the Conservative members in both Houses of parliament. When Her Majesty's government, in the spring of this year, were placed in a minority in the House of Commons on the question of disestablishing the Church in Ireland, they had to consider that the policy proposed had never been submitted to the country, and they believed that the country would not sanction it. They therefore felt it their duty to advise Her Majesty to dissolve parliament; but to make an appeal to the obsolete constituency would have been an absurdity, and the candid opinion of the country coincided with that of parliament, that no course could be satisfactory unless the voices of the enlarged electoral body were ascertained. All means were therefore taken by the ministry to expedite that appeal, and a special statute was passed for the purpose. Although the general election has elicited in the decision of numerous and vast constituencies an expression of feeling which in a remarkable degree has justified their anticipations, and which in dealing with the question in controversy no wise statesman would disregard, it is now clear that the present administration cannot expect to command

the confidence of the newly elected House of Commons.

"Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's ministers have felt it due to their own honour and to the policy they support not to retain office unnecessarily for a single day. They hold it to be more consistent with the attitude they have assumed and with the convenience of public business at this season, as well as more conducive to the just influence of the Conservative party, at once to tender the resignation of their offices to Her Majesty rather than wait for the assembling of a parliament in which, in the present aspect of affairs, they are sensible they must be in a minority. In thus acting Her Majesty's government have seen no cause to modify those opinions upon which they deemed it their duty to found their counsel to the sovereign, on the question of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. They remain convinced that the proposition of Mr. Gladstone is wrong in principle, probably impracticable in application, and if practicable would be disastrous in its effects. While ready at all times to give a fair consideration and willing aid to any plan for the improvement of the Church in Ireland, to the policy which they opposed last session—rife as they believe it to be with many calamities to society and the state—they will continue, in whatever position they occupy, to offer an uncompromising resistance."

The course pursued by Mr. Disraeli on this occasion, though it was without precedent, met with the full approval of the nation. It was considered manly, generous, and honourable. Though Mr. Gladstone had been a somewhat malevolent and acrimonious rival, there was nothing small or spiteful in the disposition of the dethroned premier. He did not recommend to Her Majesty either Lord Russell or Lord Granville as the minister pointed out by the country to form an administration, but he frankly declared

that it was in Mr. Gladstone, and in Mr. Gladstone alone, that the dominant Liberalism in the kingdom had confidence. Upon that recommendation Her Majesty acted, and Mr. Gladstone was summoned to Windsor and commanded to form a cabinet. "Mr. Disraeli," said a weekly journal, "is a splendid gambler, and when he loses he knows how to lose like a gentleman."

Mr. Disraeli did not retire into opposition without receiving expression of the royal approval in recognition of his services. He declined all honours for himself, but it was with deep gratitude and unfeigned joy that he saw the woman to whom he had been so much indebted, and whose love was as the light of his life, raised by the personal wish of the queen to the peerage as Viscountess Beaconsfield of Beaconsfield.

The administration formed by Mr. Gladstone was certainly a strong one, and was drawn entirely from the "educated section of the Liberal party." Mr. Gladstone was of course first lord of the treasury; Lord Hatherley, better known in the House of Commons, and afterwards in Lincoln's Inn, as Sir William Page Wood, held the great seal; Mr. Lowe was chancellor of the exchequer; Mr. Bruce was home secretary; Lord Clarendon controlled our foreign affairs; Lord Granville was at the colonial office; Mr. Cardwell was at the war office; the Duke of Argyle was Indian secretary; Mr. Childers was at the admiralty; Lord Hartington was post-master general; and Mr. Bright, after a few sanctimonious observations to his constituents as to his wish to remain among his own people, exercised the necessary self-denial and took office as president of the board of trade. Earl Russell and Sir George Grey declined to enter the administration. Sir Roundell Palmer, the ablest counsel at the bar, being opposed to the government on the Irish Church question, also remained outside the cabinet. The new parliament was opened by royal commission early in the second week of December, when its duties were confined to the election of a speaker, the

swearing-in of members, and the other preliminary formalities. These completed, the House of Commons adjourned to February 16, 1869, when the practical opening of the session took place.

The ministerial programme was a full one, and gave promise of much legislative activity on the part of the government. The estimates for the expenditure of the coming financial year were to be framed "with a careful regard to the efficiency of the services, and they will exhibit a diminished charge upon the country." The mode of conducting parliamentary and municipal elections was to be inquired into, in order to provide "further guarantees for their tranquillity, purity, and freedom." Bills for "the extension and improvement of education in Scotland, and for rendering the considerable revenues of the endowed schools of England more widely effectual for the purposes of instruction," would be introduced. A measure would be brought forward for applying the principle of representation to the control of the county rate by the establishment of financial boards for counties. The subject of bankruptcy would be considered. But the burning question of the hour—the Irish Church—was referred to only in general terms. "The ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland will be brought under your consideration at a very early date; and the legislation which will be necessary in order to their final adjustment, will make the largest demands on the wisdom of parliament. I am persuaded that in the prosecution of the work you will bear a careful regard to every legitimate interest which it may involve; and that you will be governed by the constant aim to promote the welfare of religion through the principles of equal justice; to secure the action of undivided feeling and opinion in Ireland on the side of loyalty and the law; to efface the memory of former contentions, and to cherish the sympathies of an affectionate people." The Houses were also informed that the relations of England with all foreign powers

continued most friendly; that negotiations had been entered into with the United States for the settlement of questions which affected the interests of the two countries; that in spite of the differences between Turkey and Greece there was no serious interruption of tranquillity in the Levant;* that disturbances had occurred in New Zealand;† and that the Habeas Corpus Act would no longer be suspended in Ireland.

In the debate upon the address Mr. Disraeli said a few words. He had heard with entire satisfaction of the relations which subsisted between England and the foreign powers. He was glad that the differences between Turkey and Greece had been settled. "I trust," he said, giving another proof of the sympathy he always expressed towards Turkey—"I trust that among the not least favourable consequences will be that the organized system by which the Porte has been continually assailed of late will probably cease; that this considerable check will afford a moral lesson to the habitual disturbers of the peace in that quarter of the world; and that the Turkish government will have the opportunity of devoting its energies to the development of the resources of that country, still for its richness unrivalled, and in which, I believe, they will find the best mode of extricating themselves from financial difficulties, which, though considerable, are not more so than those of many other countries." He was also glad to observe that the estimates were to be framed, not only with regard to economy, but with regard to the efficiency of the public service. "I am convinced," he said, reiterating the opinion he had delivered in more than one budget

* A conference had opened at Paris, January 9, 1869, touching the dispute between Turkey and Greece. The negotiations lasted ten days, and it was agreed that Greece should for the future abstain from forming bands within her territory to act against Turkey, and take the necessary measures to prevent the armament in her ports of vessels intended to aid any attempt at insurrection within the dominions of the Sultan.

† The natives in Poverty Bay, New Zealand, had risen, November 10, 1868, and massacred the settlers. Subsequently 200 of those concerned in the outrage were slain by a British force despatched to Poverty Bay to avenge the deed.

speech, "that the mere curtailment of expenditure without reference to efficiency, is one of the unwise courses which it is possible to adopt, because the inevitable result is that it leads to a great reaction of profusion, and that you subsequently find you have as large an expenditure as you had before the reduction, with the additional disadvantage of an inefficient service in the interval. I therefore highly approve that the reductions are to be made on the principle of efficiency, and I have no doubt that, guided by that principle, the result will be satisfactory to the public." He regretted the omission from the speech of any mention of a general measure of popular education, and supposed that the subject was now indefinitely postponed. He concluded by alluding to the new materials of which the House was composed. "A new House," he said, "is necessarily in a great degree inexperienced; but I hope I may be permitted to express my firm conviction, that though the materials of the House may be novel the country will find that the legislation which has led to the introduction of that novel material was not a mistake; that this House will not be less efficient than those which have preceded it; and that both in the fair manner in which its members will consider questions and the business-like method in which they will apply themselves to carry any great bills which may be necessary, they will so conduct themselves as to maintain the reputation of this House and win the confidence of the country."

But the engrossing subject of the session was the future of the Irish Church; and until it was known how Mr. Gladstone would deal with the question, neither the public nor the House took much interest in the other details of legislation that were now brought forward. The curiosity of the country was, however, not severely tested, and expectation was soon gratified. Mr. Gladstone had at the meeting of parliament arranged that on the first of March he would introduce his bill. When the day

arrived for the premier to carry out his promise, the House was crowded in every part by anxious and excited listeners. In a speech of three hours' duration Mr. Gladstone explained the provisions of his bill, and the policy it would effect. The Irish Church was to cease to be recognized by the state January 1, 1871, though the date might be altered if the House thought fit. The technical disendowment was to begin on the second reading of the bill. The Irish ecclesiastical commission was to terminate its existence on the final passing of the bill, and to be succeeded by a new commission which was to carry out the transition from the present state of the church to that of a free episcopal church: no new vested interests were to be created during the transitional period. The right of appointing Irish bishops was to be abandoned by the crown, and the Irish bishops were no longer to have seats in the House of Lords. A governing body, representing the clergy and the laity of the Irish Church, was to be elected, and legally incorporated by the government. The union between the churches of England and Ireland was to be dissolved, and the Irish ecclesiastical courts abolished. Mr. Gladstone then touched upon vested interests, the principles on which the property of the church was to be divided, and the control and appropriation of the revenues which would remain after all claims had been satisfied. He estimated the gross value of the Irish Church property at £16,000,000. From this was to be deducted the life interests of incumbents of all kinds, which would amount to £4,900,000; compensation to curates, £800,000; by compensations, £900,000; and Maynooth engagements, £1,100,000. With the large surplus he proposed to make provision for the blind, deaf, and dumb, and other charities and lunatic asylums for the relief of unavoidable calamity or suffering, but not so as to cancel the obligations of property for the relief of the poor.

Mr. Gladstone thus concluded:—"I

believe I have now gone through the chief of these almost endless arrangements; and I have laid, as well as I am able, the plans of the government before the committee. I will not venture to anticipate the judgment of the committee; but I trust it will be of opinion that it is at any rate a plan loyal to the expectations we held out on a former occasion, and loyal to the people of England who believed our promises. I hope also that the members of the committee may think that the best pains we could give have been applied in order to develop and mature the measure; and I say that with great submission to the judgment of gentlemen on this and on the other side of the House. It is a subject of legislation so exceedingly complex and varied, that I have no doubt there must be errors, omissions, and many possible improvements; and we shall welcome from every side, quite irrespective of differences of opinion on the outlines of the measure, suggestions which, when those outlines are decided on, may tend to secure a more beneficial application of those funds to the welfare of the people of Ireland.

"I trust, sir, that although its operation should be stringent, and although we have not thought it either politic or allowable to attempt to diminish its stringency by making it incomplete, the spirit towards the Church of Ireland as a religious communion in which this measure has been considered and prepared by my colleagues and myself has not been a spirit of unkindness. Perhaps at this time it is too much to expect to obtain full credit for any declaration of that kind. We are undoubtedly asking an educated, highly respected, and generally pious and zealous body of clergymen to undergo a great transition; we are asking a powerful and intelligent minority of the laity of Ireland in connection with the established church to abate a good part of the exceptional privileges they have enjoyed; but I do not feel that in making this demand on them we are seeking to inflict an injury. I do not

believe that they are exclusively, or even mainly, responsible for the errors of English policy towards Ireland: I am quite certain that in many vital respects they have suffered by it. I believe that the free air they will breathe under a system of equality and justice, giving scope for the development of their great energies with all the powers of property and intelligence they will bring to bear, will make that Ireland they love a country for them not less enviable and less beloved in the future than it has been in the past. As respects the church, I admit that, almost without exception, I do not know any country in which so great a change, so great a transition, has been proposed for the ministers of a religious communion who have enjoyed for many ages the preferred position of an established church. I can well understand that to many in the Irish establishment such a change appears to be nothing less than ruin and destruction. From the height on which they now stand the future is to them an abyss, and their fears recall the words used in "King Lear" when Edgar endeavours to persuade Gloucester that he has fallen over the cliffs of Dover, and says:—

"Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
Thy life's a miracle."

And yet but a little while after, the old man is relieved from the delusion, and finds that he has not fallen at all. So, I trust that, when the fictitious and adventitious aid on which we have too long taught the Irish establishment to lean is removed, it will place its trust in its own resources, in its own great mission, in all that it can draw from the energy of its ministers and members, and the high hopes and promises of the gospel that it teaches, and will find that it has entered upon a new era of existence—an era bright with hope and potent for good.

"At any rate, I think the day has certainly come when an end is finally to be put to that union, not between the

church and religious association, but between the establishment and the state, which was commenced under circumstances little auspicious, and has endured to be a source of unhappiness to Ireland and of scandal and discredit to England. This measure is in every sense a *great* measure; great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but nevertheless interesting details, and great as a testing measure, for it will show for one and all of us of what mettle we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility. We upon this bench are especially chargeable, nay, deeply guilty, if we have either dishonestly, or even prematurely or unwisely challenged so gigantic an issue. I know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall on those men—those Phaetons in politics—that, with hands unequal to the task, attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. But the responsibility passes beyond us, and rests on every man who has to take part in the discussion and the decision on this bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligation to raise the level of his vision and extend its scope in proportion to the greatness of the matter in hand. The working of our constitutional government is itself on its trial; for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion, under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity, to deal with a question greater and more profound. And more especially, sir, is the credit and fame of this great assembly involved; this assembly, which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honours of brilliant triumphs of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would indeed have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame,

I venture to say, will receive no small, no insensible addition."

Mr. Disraeli briefly replied. Neither he nor his followers, he said, had changed their opinions as to the policy which Mr. Gladstone had "so fully, so adequately, and so eloquently" placed before the House. The Conservative party still looked upon disestablishment as a great political error; they still looked upon the disendowment of a church, particularly when its property was to be applied to secular purposes, as mere and sheer confiscation. Under ordinary circumstances, therefore, he would have felt it his duty to resist the motion; but the circumstances were not ordinary. "I would not pretend," he said, with his usual parliamentary loyalty, "that this new House of Commons can be at all fettered by the decision at which the late House of Commons arrived; but that decision must be taken in conjunction with the decision of the country at the general election, and the course of the then existing government in consequence of that decision of the country. Under these circumstances I feel it is our duty to take a different course from that which otherwise we might have felt it our duty to pursue. I take the fair interpretation of the decision of the country at the general election to be this, that it was the opinion of the country that the right hon. gentleman should have the opportunity of dealing with the question of the Church in Ireland. I do not understand that the country pledged itself to support any particular measure. No particular measure was then before it; but it declared and decided in a manner which could not be mistaken, that the right hon. gentleman should have a fair and full opportunity of dealing with the question of the Church in Ireland. I cannot therefore take this occasion, which might otherwise have been a most legitimate one, of preventing the right hon. gentleman from placing his policy before the country; and I shall advise none of those whose conduct I can influence to oppose the motion."

As it was of importance to study the details of the bill, Mr. Disraeli concluded his remarks by hoping that an interval of three weeks would be allowed to elapse before the second reading came on. To so long a postponement Mr. Gladstone objected, as he was desirous of sending the bill up to the Lords as speedily as possible, and he felt it his duty to take the second reading before Easter. After some discussion Thursday, March 18th, was fixed upon as the date when the debate upon the second reading was to begin.

At the time appointed Mr. Disraeli was the first to open the debate upon the second reading. He began by agreeing with the statement made by Mr. Gladstone when introducing the measure, that "a gigantic issue" was being submitted to the House, for "a more profound question had never been brought under the consideration of parliament." If ever there was an instance which required on the part of the House of Commons its utmost judgment and deliberation, and also much self-control and mutual forbearance, it was the measure now laid before them to disestablish the Irish Church. "It is more than 200 years since," said Mr. Disraeli, "gigantic issues were decided on by the House of Commons. They were decided then with an earnestness of conviction not inferior to that which I am sure pervades this assembly now, but, unfortunately, with a degree of passion and prejudice on both sides which turned out to be very detrimental to the country. The decision pronounced by the House of Commons at that time on gigantic issues was followed by a period of civil discord, not more distinguished for its long duration than for the costly sacrifices which both sides in the contest had to endure. That period of civil war was followed by one of violent tranquillity—if I may so style it—but one in which certainly the principles of civil and religious liberty did not flourish. At length the two parties, alike irritated and exhausted, terminated this great experimental chapter of our history

with a passionate carelessness that recalled the old state of affairs, without securing any of those objects for the attainment of which they had originally entered into the contest. Now, I cannot help feeling that what passed in the time of our predecessors may be profitable for us to remember; and that we may derive some instruction from it, and may resolve that, whatever may be the ultimate decision of parliament on this gigantic issue, the country, which we fully represent, shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that we have arrived at the conclusion to which we may come in the light of reason, in the healthy atmosphere of instructed public opinion, with a deep sense of individual responsibility on the part of every member of this House, and after the most vigilant and mature deliberation."

The measure before them, continued Mr. Disraeli, proposed to accomplish two objects. The first was to sever the union between church and state, which, for the convenience of debate, was called disestablishment. The second was to empower the state to seize the property of a corporation, which, for the convenience of debate, was called disendowment. He would ask the House to allow him to make a few general observations upon disestablishment and disendowment. They were, to his mind, totally different matters, though they were frequently mixed up together, and the consequences of the one attributed to the other. "Now, sir, with regard to disestablishment, I myself am much opposed to it, because I am in favour of what is called the union between church and state. What I understand by the union of church and state is an arrangement which renders the state religious by investing authority with the highest sanctions that can influence the sentiments, the convictions, and consequently the conduct of the subject; while, on the other hand, that union renders the church—using that epithet in its noblest and purest sense—political; that is to say, it blends civil authority with ecclesiastical

influence; it defines and defends the rights of the laity, and prevents the church from subsidizing into a sacerdotal corporation. If you divest the state of this connection, it appears to me that you necessarily reduce both the quantity and the quality of its duties. The state will still be the protector of our persons and our property, and no doubt these are most important duties for the state to perform. But there are duties in a community which rather excite a spirit of criticism than a sentiment of enthusiasm and veneration. All or most of the higher functions of government—take education for example, the formation of the character of the people, and consequently the guidance of their future conduct—depart from the state and become the appanage of religious societies, of the religious organizations of the country—you may call them the various churches if you please—when they are established on what are called independent principles.

“Now, the first question which necessarily arises in this altered state of affairs is—are we quite certain that in making this severance between political and religious influence we may not be establishing in a country a power greater than the acknowledged government itself? I know this is a very philosophical age. I know there are many who consider that the religious influence is a waning influence, and that it is a mark of an enlightened statesman to divest the exercise of authority as much as possible of any connection with religion. *These are not my views.* I do not believe that the influence of religion is a waning influence in public affairs. I have for a considerable time rather been of opinion, that we are on the eve of a period when the influence of religion on public affairs may be predominant. It is very difficult in a popular assembly, as we all know, to touch upon subjects in which religion is concerned; and thirty years ago or so, when questions connected with religion were first constantly cropping up, if I may use the expression, in this House, it was curious and interesting

to observe how both sides mutually agreed that, as it was necessary to legislate on these questions, parliament should confine its attentions as much as possible to the mere technical details of the bills before it, avoiding any unnecessary reference to religious sentiment or principles. All this, however, has entirely changed. The religious principle, its influence upon men, its material consequences in endowments, in ecclesiastical establishments, in sects and synods—how far it is necessary in the exercise of political power that it should to a certain degree be consecrated, and how far it is necessary for the enjoyment of religious liberty that the civil authority should exercise some control upon the religious organization of the country—these have now become not only political questions, but the greatest of political questions. It is impossible for us any longer to avoid that discussion. All we can do is to meet these questions fully and frankly, and, if possible, in a spirit of charity and of good temper, placing upon any expressions used on either side a favourable and friendly construction. I can only say that, if I make any of those ‘rhetorical mishaps’ which are necessarily incident to our free habit of discussion in this House, I am sure no gentleman opposite or on my side of the House will suppose for a moment that I wish to wound his feelings or offend his conscience.

“When we have to decide whether we can dissociate the principle of religion from the state, it is well to remember that we are asked to relinquish an influence that is universal. We hear in these days a great deal of philosophy. Now it is my happiness in life to be acquainted with eminent philosophers. They all agree in one thing. They will all tell you that, however brilliant the discoveries of physical science, however marvellous those demonstrations which attempt to penetrate the mysteries of the human mind, wonderful as may be these discoveries, greatly as they have contributed to the comfort and conveni-

ence of man, or confirmed his consciousness of the nobility of his nature—yet all those great philosophers agree in one thing—that in their investigations *there is an inevitable term where they meet the insoluble, where all the most transcendent powers of intellect dissipate and disappear*. There commences the religious principle. It is universal, and it will assert its universal influence in the government of men.

“Now, I put this case before the House. We are asked to commence a great change, for it is impossible to consider the effect of this measure merely with the limited, though important bearing, which is on the face of it. The right hon. gentleman has himself given a frank and fair warning to parliament. He has told them he was going to call for their decision upon a ‘gigantic issue.’ He has himself admitted that a greater or more profound question was never submitted to parliament. When, therefore, we are called to the consideration of these circumstances, it is absolutely necessary that we should contemplate the possibility of our establishing a society in which there may be two powers, the political and the religious, and the religious may be the stronger. Now, I will take this case. Under ordinary circumstances, a government performing those duties of police to which it will be limited when the system has perfectly developed—the first step of which we are called upon to take to-night—such a government under ordinary circumstances will be treated with decent respect. But a great public question such as has before occurred in this country, and as must periodically occur in free and active communities—a great public question arises which touches the very fundamental principles of our domestic tranquillity, or even the existence of the empire; but the government of the country, and the religious organizations of the country, take different views and entertain different opinions upon that subject. In all probability the government of the country will be right. The government in its secret councils is calm

and impartial, is in possession of ample and accurate information, views every issue before it in reference to the interests of all classes, and takes, therefore, what is popularly called a comprehensive view. The religious organization of the country acts in quite a different manner. It is not calm, it is not impartial; it is sincere, it is fervid, it is enthusiastic. Its information is limited and prejudiced. It does not view the question of the day in reference to the interests of all classes. It looks upon the question as something of so much importance—as something of such transcendent interest, not only for the earthly, but even for the future welfare of all Her Majesty’s subjects—that it will allow no consideration to divert its mind and energy from the accomplishment of its object. It, therefore, necessarily takes what is commonly called a contracted view. But who can doubt what will be the result when, on a question which enlists and excites all the religious passions of the nation, the zeal of enthusiasm advocates one policy, and the calmness of philosophers and the experience of statesmen recommend another? The government might be right, but the government would not be able to enforce its policy; and the question might be decided in a way that might disturb a country or even destroy an empire.

“I know it may be said that, though there may be some truth in this view abstractedly considered, yet it does not apply to the country in which we live, because this is a country in which we enjoy religious freedom and in which toleration is established, and because only a portion of Her Majesty’s subjects are in communion with the national church. I draw a very different conclusion to that which I have supposed—and I believe fairly supposed—as the objection made to the argument I am now offering. It is because there is an established church that we have achieved religious liberty and enjoy religious toleration; and *without the union of the church with the state I do not see what security there*

would be either for religious liberty or toleration. No error could be greater than to suppose that the advantage of the established church is limited to those who are in communion with it. Take the case of the Roman Catholic priest. He will refuse—and in doing so he is quite justified, and is, indeed, bound to do so—he will, I say, refuse to perform the offices of the church to any one not in communion with it. The same with the Dissenters. It is quite possible—it has happened, and might happen very frequently—that a Roman Catholic may be excommunicated by his church, or a sectarian may be denounced and expelled by his congregation; but if that happens in this country, the individual in question who has been thus excommunicated, denounced, or expelled, is not a forlorn being. There is the church, of which the sovereign is the head, which does not acknowledge the principle of dissent, and which does not refuse to that individual those religious rites which are his privilege and consolation. I therefore hold that the connection between church and state is really a guarantee for religious liberty and toleration, that it maintains, as it were, the standard of religious liberty and toleration just as much as we by other means sustain the standard of value. If you wish to break up a state, and destroy and disturb a country, you can never adopt a more effectual method for the purpose than by destroying at the same time the standards of value and toleration.

“Now, I would wish to make one or two observations on the question of disendowment. I consider that if the state seizes the property of a corporation without alleging any cause, it is spoliation. But if the state alleges some penal cause for its violence, though it may be an unfounded, tyrannical, and oppressive one, then I understand the act of the state to be confiscation. I make that distinction between the two processes, and I think the House will find that there is something in it. I am not about to uphold the doctrine that

there is no difference between corporate and private property. I acknowledge the difference fully and frankly. The state has relations with all property; but the relations of the state with private and with corporate property are of a different character. I would attempt to express them thus. The relations of the state to private property are the relations of a guardian. The relations of the state to corporate property are those of a trustee. The duty of a guardian to his ward is mainly to protect his ward. The duties of a trustee are of a more complicated character. Undoubtedly his first duty is to see that the intentions of the founder are fulfilled, as far as the varying circumstances of generations will permit. I will make the admission, for I wish to argue the case fairly, that unquestionably, if he finds that the resources at his command are extravagantly beyond what are necessary for the object in view, or that the purpose of the trust is pernicious, it is his duty to consider by what means a redistribution of those funds and of that property may be safely accomplished. But this I do lay down as a principle which I will maintain against all comers, that under no circumstances whatever ought a trustee to appropriate to himself property of which he is the fiduciary. If that were permitted, there would be no security whatever for property of any description. A minister might throw his eye upon any wealthy corporation and say, ‘I will confiscate this property and apply it to the partial discharge of the national debt, or to the entire discharge of the floating debt;’ or he might say, ‘Taxation is never very popular; the taxation of this country which I rule is on the whole founded on just principles; but there are great murmurs not only against taxes, but also rates; I will confiscate the property of this corporation, and I shall consequently be enabled sensibly to relieve the country, and thus, of course, obtain a great increase of power and popularity.’ But if that course were pursued I am certain that the tenure of no property would be

safe, and the credit of the country must collapse.

"Having made these observations with respect to private and corporate property, I would now ask permission to state the grounds why I am, on the whole, *entirely opposed to confiscating the property of corporations*, why I view it alike with dislike and suspicion. The reason is that, in the first place, whatever may have been the origin of corporate property—whether the gift of the nation, which was rarely the case, or the donation of individuals, as was generally its source—one thing is clear, that it is, from its use and purpose, essentially popular property—the property of the nation, though not of the state. The second reason why I dislike all confiscation of corporate property is, that I find that no great act of confiscation was ever carried into effect without injurious consequences to the state in which it took place. Either—generally speaking—it has led to civil war or established, what in the long run is worse, a chronic disaffection for ages among the subjects of the crown. But if there be any corporate property the confiscation of which I most dislike, it is church property, and for these reasons—church property is to a certain degree an intellectual tenure; in a greater degree, a moral and spiritual tenure. *It is the fluctuating patrimony of the great body of the people*. It is, I will not say the only, but—even with our most developed civilization—it is the easiest method by which the sons of the middle and even of the working classes can become landed proprietors, and what is more, can become resident landed proprietors, and fulfil all the elevating duties incident to the position. But there is another reason why I am greatly opposed to the confiscation of church property, and that is, because I invariably observe that when church property is confiscated, it is always given to the landed proprietors.

"I hope that in this House I shall not be accused of being opposed to the interests of those connected with the land of this

country. I look upon the land tenure of this country as, on the whole, one of the most beneficial and most successful institutions that has been created out of the feudal system. It is a tenure that, by dispersing over the soil a number of residents deeply interested in it, has secured local government, which is the best safeguard of political liberty; and, on the other hand, it is a tenure which, while it has attained for us these great social and political advantages, has been consistent with making the soil of this country, on the whole, the most productive in the world—that is to say, not only in the Old World but in the New World you cannot find a tract of land of equal size with that of the United Kingdom which is so generally and so uniformly productive. Therefore, I think I am justified in saying that it is a tenure which, both on account of its social and political advantages, and the great material consequences it has secured to the country, may be truly described as one of the most advantageous. I have not the slightest objection myself to the landed proprietors of the country increasing their wealth and increasing their power, so long as they do it by legitimate means—by the improvement of their estates, or in the fulfilment of those duties which the constitution of their country so generously, but wisely, has assigned to them. We know very well that the landed interest of this country will have their position examined and challenged, as every institution and class in this age will be; yet I believe that, for the reasons I have indicated, they will give a triumphant answer, and issue from that scrutiny with the approbation and sympathy of the great body of their countrymen. But I am sure of this, they cannot, especially in this age and in the circumstances under which we live, take a more short-sighted course to increase their property and their influence than to have any hand in sacrilegious spoliation."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to consider what would be the probable consequence of the course which Mr. Gladstone recom-

mended. The government of Ireland was not a strong one; its sanctions were less valid than those of the government of England. It had not the historic basis which England had. It had not the tradition which the English government rested upon. It did not depend upon that vast accumulation of manners and customs which in England were really more powerful than laws and statutes. The government of Ireland was only comparatively strong from its connection with England; and the reason the government of Ireland was a weak government was, that a considerable portion of the inhabitants of Ireland were disorderly and discontented. He would not investigate the causes, alleged or real, of Irish discontent. They were like Martial's Epigrams; some were just, some unjust; some were well-founded, some fantastical; some were true, some false. But no one denied that discontent existed; and no one denied that among the causes of Irish discontent was, that a powerful clergy, exercising their influence over numerous congregations, had no connection with the state. But what was the policy of Mr. Gladstone? "Ireland is discontented; one of the causes of its discontent is that a church is not connected with the state; I will regenerate the country, and I will have three churches not connected with the state." What must be the consequences of such a policy? Would they have a better chance of encountering Irish discontent when three churches were disconnected with the state than when they had only one? How would it work? "There will be great discontent in Ireland," replied Mr. Disraeli, "and whenever there is great discontent in Ireland, the church that is not connected with the state always supplies a body of learned, disciplined, and eloquent men who are the exponents of that discontent. Well, you will then have discontent in Ireland, and you will have three bodies of learned, organized, and eloquent men who will only be doing their duty to their congregations

by being the exponents of this great disaffection. It is not a wild assumption on my part if I were to suppose that with *the cause of the next great Irish discontent the land may be in some degree connected*; and what will be the necessary and natural feelings of the three churches on the land question? I do not, as some do, I do not myself contemplate the immediate cessation of all dogmatic differences between the three churches. I am in hopes that year after year any asperity of this kind arising from such a source may be softened; but I think I may venture to say this—that there will be one dogma in which the three churches will entirely agree, which will be as unanimously adopted as any that may be sanctioned by any impending œcumenical council; and that dogma will be this—that the clergy of the three churches, whether they were disendowed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth or in the reign of Queen Victoria, have all been equally ill-treated. And where there is this general discontent upon the land question they will naturally say—'We entirely agree with the feeling of the nation, the land question is a question that must be settled.' They will say—'The people have lost the great estate which belonged to the church as their trustees, and where it is neither the clergy who were disendowed in the reign of Elizabeth nor the clergy disendowed in the reign of Queen Victoria will be able to tell you.' Therefore, I have not the slightest doubt myself that the general discontent prevailing from the city of the Tribes to the capital of the linen manufacture, will find learned, earnest, and eloquent exponents of the wrongs of the country without any reference to differences in religious creed. The land question will assume many forms with one purpose. The multiplied demand will be irresistible unless we meet it with an alternative, and what that alternative is I will notice subsequently. Such, in my mind, are the probable—I will not say immediate—consequences, but consequences that will

occur in the early experience of many men who sit in this House, of the policy of disestablishment in Ireland, as it is advised by the right hon. gentleman the first minister. And such are the prospects which disestablishment affords us of rendering a people contented and a government strong."

Nor, continued Mr. Disraeli, would the policy of disendowment be a whit more promising. Mr. Gladstone proposed to deprive the Protestant Church in Ireland of its property. The natural question that immediately arose was—Why? Did anybody claim the property? Nobody claimed it. Did Mr. Gladstone believe that any other church would use the property with more advantage? Certainly not, for he did not propose to give it to any other church. Was the tenure of the property of the church unsatisfactory and feeble? Quite the reverse. On the contrary, it was the strongest tenure in the country; and it did not merely depend on the Act of Settlement, as the estates of most gentlemen did, because it had a prescription of three centuries. One was naturally and necessarily anxious to know under those circumstances—when no one asked for the property, when Mr. Gladstone even did not pretend that any other church would carry out the intentions of the founders better than the Protestant Church, and when he did not deny that the tenure of the Protestant Church was a complete and powerful tenure—why he deprived it of its property. That was a natural question to ask, and it was one on which they ought to have a satisfactory answer. According to Mr. Gladstone, the reason why the Protestant Church in Ireland was to be deprived of its property was that the feelings of the Roman Catholics in Ireland were hurt by the Protestants having endowments, although the Roman Catholic Church wished to depend on voluntary contributions, and although they were clearly of opinion that, because the Protestant Church was endowed, that was

the reason why the Protestant Church in Ireland was a comparative failure. That, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, was the most extraordinary reason that had ever yet been adduced by a minister for a great act of confiscation, and it behoved the House well and narrowly to consider it. It was an entirely new principle to take away the property of one corporation because there was another body jealous of that corporation having the property. It was not only a new principle, but a new principle which might be applied to all kinds of property, and for that reason, because it had no peculiar reference to corporate property. It did not touch any of the attributes of corporate property, whether good or evil. Mr. Gladstone, as the representative of the state, which was the great trustee in the matter, confessed that the property of the Protestant Church in Ireland was not greater than its needs. He confessed that the provisions for the management of that property were not only good, but excellent and admirable. Mr. Gladstone did not for a moment pretend that he had any other body in his eye that could carry out the intention of the original founder or donor better than the body whose property he was going to confiscate. It was not in his character as a fiduciary, or with reference to corporate property particularly, that this rule was laid down. It was a new principle that might be applied to private property tomorrow. It was the principle of forfeiture without a pretext. It was a new principle since they had had a settled constitution, and since they came to live under the laws of progressive civilization. Otherwise it was an old principle enough, because it was the principle of tyranny and oppression in the darkest ages.

"But now," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "see in what inscrutable mischief we may be landed if this principle is sanctioned. It cannot be confined to corporate property, because it has no affinity to corporate property. Apply it to private property. We are so used to plundering churches, that

the moment a corporation is known to be in possession of a large property an hon. member gives notice of his intention to bring the subject before the House. The fact is that our eyes are shut to the enormity of the circumstances when they are tested by objects with which we are daily familiar. Therefore, let us try this principle, which is an open principle, and not peculiar to corporations, and apply it to private property. I will ask the attention of the House to this part of the subject. In Ireland," said Mr. Disraeli, creating much laughter by putting an hypothetical case of the extension of the principle to private property, "there are many estates—many large and many rich estates, and they belong, most of them, to Irish gentlemen. There are also many Irish gentlemen in Ireland, amiable and accomplished men, the most agreeable companions in the world, but who have not large estates, and some of whom have no estates at all. After the announcement by the right hon. gentleman of this startling principle of sheer forfeiture, without the application to the property of any other machinery to carry out the intentions of the founders—after the proclamation by the right hon. gentleman of this astounding principle—what will be the natural course of an Irish gentleman in the position I have described? His argument would be this—'We find ourselves in an anomalous position. Our breeding is not inferior to that of our habitual companions. Our education is the same. Our pursuits are similar. We meet in the same hunting field. We drink the same claret. We stand opposite to each other in the same dance. And our feelings are hurt by some of our companions having estates of £6,000, or £8,000, or £10,000 a year, with broad acres and extensive woods. We know well the spirit of the age, that the sentiment of selfishness is not to be tolerated. We do not ask for the estates of our more fortunate companions. All we ask is that you will take their estates away from them, and establish, as one of the great principles of

Irish regeneration, social equality; and let all Irish gentlemen, like the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, live upon voluntary contributions.' And yet this is the great principle which I am told several hon. gentlemen opposite have pledged themselves to support, and that without even being acquainted with it."

It might be said there was a distinction between corporate and private property, and therefore he might be accused of pressing the case too much in the instance he had given. He did not think so. He believed it was not peculiar to corporate property, and that those gentlemen who had private property would do well to consider whether it did not touch their case. But he was willing to apply it to corporate property. "I speak," he continued, "in the capital of an ancient nation, remarkable above all the nations of the world for its rich endowments. Charity, in its most gracious, most learned, and most humane form, has established institutions in this country to soften the asperities of existence. There are three great hospitals alone in this city, endowed with estates which would permit them to rank with some of the wealthiest of our peers. Their united revenues alone considerably exceed £100,000. The House knows well these great establishments—St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's, and Guy's. But there are other hospitals in the country, where the physicians are not less celebrated, the surgeons not less skilful, the staff not less devoted, and which give all their energies, thought, learning, and life to mitigate the sufferings of humanity. Well, I say, would it not, according to the new views and the new principle, be as painful as the existence of an endowed Protestant church is to the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, for these eminent physicians and surgeons and their devoted staff to feel that their greatest efforts were often unable to accomplish all that they desired, and that their position as a voluntary body sometimes entailed upon them humiliation. Why should not the

minister come forward in a like spirit with that which now seems to inspire all his policy, and concede to these gentlemen that the painful anomaly should be terminated, and that St. George's Hospital, Middlesex Hospital, University College Hospital, and perhaps Westminster Hospital, all depending upon voluntary contributions, should be placed on a footing of equality with those great institutions which by their endowments imparted to those connected with them a factitious importance in the profession, by the process of depriving these latter of their estates? Well, there might, no doubt, a good deal be said in favour of that view. The minister would have £120,000 a year to dispose of, and he could in the handsomest manner give it to the farmers of England towards the reduction of the county rates. And I ask you seriously, if you are to adopt these principles for Ireland, is it possible that you should not apply them also to England?"

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to explain that the scheme of confiscation could not be carried out without the co-operation of the victims. Three temptations were held out to the Irish Protestant clergy to join in the operation. Their vested interests were to be respected; but that went for nothing, since no minister could propose such a measure as the bill before the House without that proviso, which was a mere commonplace of confiscation. Then the glebe-houses of the Irish clergy were to be given to them, but charged with a price, and their life interests were to be capitalized. Yet, asked Mr. Disraeli, what security was there that another measure of confiscation might not follow? And as to the proposal for the extinction of the tithe-rent charge, he predicted that the end of the whole operation would be that the property of the church would go into the pockets of the landlords. "Well," said Mr. Disraeli, "the landlords of Ireland have had a slice of that property before. For thirty years they have had £100,000 a year. They have probably had £3,000,000

of that property; and what good has it done them? Is the state of Ireland more tranquil and serene, or have they better preserved the institutions to which they were devoted, because they for a moment accepted any share of that plunder? Why, we all know that nothing of the kind has followed. And what is it that is now proposed? Why, a scheme which, when we come to investigate it, clearly shows that the whole of the tithe-rent charge is to be absorbed in the land. The right hon. gentleman says that every landowner may buy up the tithe-rent charge on his land, when his tithe-rent charge will be instantly absorbed in his land; and then if the landowner will not buy the tithe-rent charge, the right hon. gentleman makes out a compulsory account by which the landowner shall seem to buy it. But the result is that the whole of the tithe-rent charge will be immediately absorbed in the land, and that there will be a complicated system of pecuniary transactions extending over a period of forty-five years. Five and forty years' engagements of Irish landlords! and that, too, in a country which confiscates church property—in a country where there is a land question looming in the future! Do you not think that the landlords will want justice done to the land? Do you not think they will come forward and say, 'Well, if the land question must be settled, we will take a part in its settlement?' Depend upon it when the great rising occurs—when the great demand to which I have referred is made and expounded by the eloquence and learning of the clergy of the three churches—the Irish landlords will wonderfully sympathize with that new Act of Settlement."

After having objected to the disposal of the surplus, and to the proposed mode of dealing with the Maynooth grant and the *Regium Donum*, as direct breaches of solemn engagements, Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—"Now, sir, this is to be the remedial policy for Ireland. You have been disturbed and distracted by a clergy

not connected with the state, and therefore you are now to have three sets of clergy not connected with the state. You have complained over and over again that one of the great evils of Ireland was the want of a variety of classes. But here is an Act which destroys a class. You have told us night after night that the curse of Ireland was the want of resident proprietors, but here is legislation to do away with a great number of resident proprietors. The curse of Ireland, as every one knows, is its poverty, but here is an Act to confiscate property! I said there was an alternative. When I ventured to express to the House the probable consequences of this scheme of the right hon. gentleman, I stated to the House that they must contemplate the possibility of great and continued discontent in Ireland; *that that discontent would be connected with the question of the tenure of land*; that the clergy, disendowed according to their own statements at different periods, but both of them agreeing that they had been disendowed, would become the natural and powerful mouth-pieces of this general discontent; and that you would have to yield to the demands which the whole nation through its most powerful organs would advance, and with which demands I venture to say the Irish landlords would unite. Their claim would be for restoration. All classes would call upon you to restore the popular estate which you have confiscated, and whatever difference of opinion might still subsist between different churches, all churches would agree that Irish property was national property. I say, then, that you would have to consent to that restoration unless you took refuge in an alternative. I think the alternative would be this. I think you might resist what was called a restoration of their rights, and which would probably bring about a scene of universal tumult. Instead of complying with this demand you would say to them—*There shall be religious equality between the two countries. You disendowed clergy shall not have ground*

to complain of being treated differently from any clergy, and we will apply to the Church in England the same principles which we have applied to the Church in Ireland.' That conclusion appears to me to be inevitable. I have no doubt that there are some gentlemen who hear me, who would not regret such a consummation. I am perfectly aware that there are gentlemen sitting in this House who approve such a policy; and that they have in the country a party which likewise approves such a policy. But I do not approve such a policy; and I am sure, whatever their majority may be, they will not grudge me the right of asserting in this House the propriety of my opinion. *Sir, I believe that that result will be inevitable.* Indeed, it may be inferred from the language of the prime minister that he himself, though he may not now approve, still contemplates it. Now, I cannot believe that the disendowment of the Church of England could occur without very great disturbances. I am convinced that it might lead to consequences, which those who have not given a very long consideration to the subject may think impossible or remote. I believe that these consequences would be near at hand. England cannot afford revolution. England has had 'r revolutions. It is indeed because she had revolutions about 200 years ago, before other nations had their revolutions, that she gained her great start in wealth and in empire.

"Now, sir, what have we gained by those revolutions? A period of nearly 200 years of great serenity and the secured stability of the state. I attribute these happy characteristics of our history to the circumstance, that in this interval we did solve two of the finest and profoundest political problems. We accomplished complete personal and, in time, complete political liberty, and combined them with order. We achieved complete religious liberty, and we united it with a national faith. These two immense exploits have won for this

country regulated freedom and temperate religion; and these blessings we have, I am bound to say, secured mainly by the action—sometimes the unconscious action—but entirely by the action of the two great parties in the state. I have often, when I have had to consider the history of what are called Whigs and Tories, been surprised that—after great national vicissitudes, and notwithstanding the enormous blunders and mistakes which confessedly both have made, and the occasional violence, not to say faction, of their conduct which our annals record—these two great parties should always reappear. That fact proves that there must be something very deep in their roots, and that they must have touched the heart of the people. Speaking now, not as a partisan, I believe the Tory party, however it may at times have erred, has always been the friend of local government, and that the instinct of the nation made it feel that on local government political freedom depended. It has been the glorious privilege of the great Whig party to achieve religious liberty, because by as wise an instinct they felt that religious liberty must be based on the connection between civil authority and ecclesiastical influence. These have secured to us the advantages we enjoy. In this age we seem to have forgotten by what heroic efforts the great blessings of regulated freedom and temperate religion have been secured, and how much they have tended to the greatness and the glory of our common country. Custom has made this a strong, and tradition has made it a wise nation. There are now high-flying statesmen who make war on tradition and scorn custom. I, for one, will not take upon myself the responsibility of their courses. I have expressed feebly, but freely, as our political life permits, my view of the policy of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the government. I believe the bill he has introduced for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church

in Ireland to be a dangerous measure, and I leave its consideration with confidence to the prudence and patriotism of parliament."

The debate on the second reading of the bill was carried over four nights, and gave rise to an exhibition of parliamentary eloquence such as the present generation have seldom witnessed. On the Liberal side of the House the speeches which were listened to with the deepest interest were those delivered by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Sir Roundell Palmer, and Mr. Lowe. Among the Conservatives the two most effective speeches were those made by Dr. Ball, who had been the attorney-general for Ireland in the late Conservative administration, and by Mr. Gathorne Hardy. The eloquence of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, during the debates upon the Irish Church bill, occupied very much the same position as had the eloquence of Mr. Lowe during the debates upon the reform bill introduced by the Liberal government. The speeches of Mr. Gathorne Hardy—earnest, logical, convincing, and full of the fire of the born orator and of the resources of the practised debater—were those which were most eagerly read by the public, which most represented the views of the cultivated section of English society, which were the most heartily cheered by the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and were the most difficult for the ministerialists to meet and refute. As in 1866 the speeches of Mr. Lowe cast in the shade the speeches of Mr. Disraeli, so now in 1869 it was considered that the eloquence of the leader of the Opposition had to yield the palm to the brilliancy of his active and incisive lieutenant.

Amid much excitement the second reading was carried by a majority of 118—ayes, 368; noes, 250. The result of this division was regarded, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, as decisive of the fate of the bill. The House now adjourned for the Easter recess.

CHAPTER VI.

REPOSE.

ALMOST immediately on the re-assembling of parliament after the holidays, the Irish Church bill became the subject of much discussion and minute criticism in committee. Mr. Gladstone was anxious that the measure should be sent up early in the session to the House of Lords, so that the peers might have ample opportunity to consider its details, and not offer as an excuse for its rejection a want of sufficient time for the examination of its clauses. In spite of the analysis and numerous objections to which the bill was subjected in the Lower House, it rapidly passed through committee. The leader of the Opposition, aware that in the face of the majority the prime minister commanded it would be futile to attempt to defeat the measure, exercised all his efforts to temper the harshness of certain of its clauses by the suggestion of amendments, which would to some extent break the downfall of the Irish Church and ameliorate the condition of her clergy. He was especially anxious that the second clause of the bill, which proposed the dissolution of the legislative union between the churches of England and Ireland, should be omitted. He desired to retain the identity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government between the two churches provided for by the Act of Union—a maintenance which he proved would not prevent the disestablishment and disendowment contemplated by the bill. There was no need, he said, to sever the tie between religion and the crown. Unless the clause were struck out the religious equality aimed at would not be gained. As long as the Pope remained at Rome the Roman Catholic Church would be an established church, not only in Ireland, but wherever she

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existed; and therefore, to be fair to both, the Episcopalians ought to enjoy the same advantage of having a supreme head.

"The omission of the second clause," explained Mr. Disraeli (April 16, 1869), "will leave the committee free to decide upon all the points which are affected by the policy of the first minister. They may, if they choose, entirely despoil the Irish Protestant Church; they may banish the bishops from the House of Lords; they may close the ecclesiastical courts; they may terminate every ceremony, every privilege, and every practice which hitherto they have held up to odium and alleged to be the cause of national jealousy and discontent: but that they may do by maintaining the Union complete, by not disturbing the articles of one of the most solemn muniments of the kingdom. They may permit the sovereign of England to maintain her salutary privilege of guarding the doctrine, of vindicating the discipline, of regulating the worship of the church, and of securing for it a temperate and equitable government—sources in my mind of security to the state and guarantees for the progress and permanence of civilization." The amendment was, however, rejected by a majority of 123, on the ground that it was incompatible with the scope of the bill, and that the Irish Church when once disestablished had no right to have identity of doctrine and worship with the English Church secured by law; since the chief characteristic of an establishment was that its laws were the laws of the land.

Another important discussion took place upon the disendowing clause, which proposed to vest all the property of the church in commissioners to be appointed

by the bill. Owing to the absence of Mr. Disraeli at this time from temporary indisposition, Mr. Gathorne Hardy was intrusted with the charge of the amendments drawn up by the leader of the Opposition. Mr. Hardy moved to postpone the transfer of church property to the commissioners for another year; the additional year being, in his opinion, absolutely necessary for the carrying out of all the preliminary arrangements. This amendment was, however, to meet with the same fate as its predecessor, and was rejected by a large majority. Indeed all the amendments proposed by Mr. Disraeli, which had for their object a generous increase in the compensation allowances to the Irish clergy, were defeated. Mr. Gladstone was conscious of his power, and despotically wielded it—he would suffer no tampering with the integrity of his measure.

After the various disputed points—the compensation of curates and incumbents, the power of the Irish Church to hold lands, the commutation and redemption of life-interests, the treatment of the glebe-houses and of private endowments, the Maynooth and *Regium Donum* clauses, and the like—had been settled, the motion for the final stage of the bill, the third reading, was moved (May 31, 1869) exactly three months from the time when the measure was first introduced in the House of Commons.

At the close of the debate on the third reading Mr. Disraeli delivered at some length a critical and condemnatory judgment upon the policy of the government. He began by instituting a comparison between the Ireland of the past and the Ireland of the present. In former days, he said, when the disorders and discontents of a portion of the Irish people were brought under the consideration of parliament, there was only one specific for the grievances then felt. Statesman and agitator, Whig and Tory, all agreed that the causes of those discontents and disturbances were political, and therefore that the remedy for them should be of the same

character. Hence, year after year, specifics of that kind were brought forward by ministers—parliamentary reform, municipal reform, jury reform, great schemes of national education and great systems of national police—all of which were to ameliorate the condition of the people of Ireland. Yet, notwithstanding those various measures of improvement, it was discovered necessary to introduce periodically an arms bill or insurrection act. And why? Because all public men, and all parties, persisted in shutting their eyes to the real cause of Irish disturbance and discontent. Every one refused to recognize that such cause was a physical cause, and produced by physical circumstances, which probably no statesman and no party could attempt to remedy or encounter. Yet the simple cause was now better understood; for the House knew that such discontent was occasioned by the fact that more than a quarter of the people of Ireland consisted of paupers, and of paupers in a helpless condition. On a square mile in Ireland, with reference to the cultivated portion of the country, there was a population greater than was to be found in any European or even Asiatic country. That population depended for their subsistence upon the humblest means with which ever any race of men were content.

"All these facts," said Mr. Disraeli, "are now recognized, and some light can be thrown upon the state of Ireland. But at that period those who had to consider it were perplexed and appalled by the difficulties they had to encounter. They had recourse to political palliatives, and they trusted they might at least gain time. When you conceive the position of a country where one-fourth, and more than one-fourth, of the population were paupers, and paupers in a hopeless condition—when you know, as may be proved from documents on this table, that there were 600,000 families in Ireland who were only employed for twenty out of the fifty-two weeks in the year—you can form some idea of a national

condition which does not prevail in any other part of Europe. Recollect also that the population in this state of extreme adversity was not a stolid one, brutalized by their condition, as has sometimes happened in other parts of Europe, but a nation of much susceptibility, of quick feeling and imagination, ready to place themselves under the leading of any impassioned orator who called upon them to assemble and discuss the grievances of their country, or quick to yield to all the subdolous machinery which constitutes a secret society. And so you had in Ireland gigantic public meetings, on a scale that never took place in any other country—as at Clontarf and Tara; or on the other hand, you had Ribbon societies and organizations of that kind. All this time this country was governed by a peculiarly weak administration. With institutions which from circumstances were necessarily, even if of a beneficial kind, of a limited influence, you had to encounter elements of disorder and disturbance in Ireland with the weakest administration that was probably ever devised by man.

“Well now, under such circumstances, every one felt that the position of Ireland was one which would always constitute the difficulty of a British minister; and one of the most eminent of British ministers [Mr. Pitt] acknowledged that Ireland was his difficulty. He only acknowledged that that was his fate which was the destiny of every minister of every party who attempted to meet such circumstances; and everybody felt that nothing but some great event, impossible to contemplate, could possibly remedy a state of affairs so anomalous and so irregular as that which prevailed in Ireland. A revolution might have produced the necessary consequences and changes in any other country; but a revolution in Ireland seemed impossible, and a human and political revolution was impossible in Ireland from its connection with England. But a revolution did take place: not one of those great changes produced by political parties, because it

was an event which destroyed parties; not produced by political passions, because it appeased and allayed all political passions—one of the most appalling events that have occurred in modern times, perhaps the most awful and appalling event that ever happened with reference to any European country. The limited means of sustenance by which those two millions of hopeless paupers had existed suddenly vanished, as if stricken from the soil. They perished by thousands and tens of thousands. Emigration followed famine and disease.

“In the course of a year after that emigration you had to pass in this House an Act of confiscation of many estates in that country; and so far as revolution is concerned, there is no revolution of modern times which ever produced changes so extensive as were occasioned by the famine, by the emigration, and by the Encumbered Estates’ Act of 1849, passed in this House. Well, when the two countries had somewhat recovered from these appalling circumstances, when the earthquake and the fire had passed, and the still, small voice of counsel was heard, it did appear both to England and Ireland that if ever there was an opportunity in which the terrible state that had so long prevailed might be terminated—when we could prevent its ever being repeated—that opportunity had arrived. Costly as may have been the price, great as may have been the sacrifice, there was at least some compensation in the conviction that so far as the two countries were concerned there was, at least, the opportunity of establishing a system different from that fatal condition which had almost for centuries baffled the devices of ministers and the noblest aspirations of a great people.”

Since the date of that terrible famine, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, a new policy had been adopted both by Whig and Tory towards Ireland. “To secure the due administration of justice, to open to all creeds and to all races the fair career of

merit, to soften, without having recourse to those violent changes which would alarm the interests and perhaps outrage the feelings of any considerable part of the Irish people—to soften, I say, those anomalies which as yet prevailed in their social system—to mitigate and countervail them—that was the policy of the English government; and whoever might form that government, whatever party might sit on the Treasury bench, that was the system followed and which has for years invariably prevailed.” There was no captiousness, no suspicion; on the contrary, both parties exhibited on every occasion even an eagerness to support a policy of that kind. And the most beneficial results had ensued to Ireland, during the last twenty years, from the carrying out of that policy. The most considerable industry of the country had been completely reorganized, on conditions highly favourable to the labourers on the soil. The wages of agricultural labour had almost doubled, and a system of continuous labour had sprung up. Capital had poured into the country to be applied to the development of Irish manufactures. Trade had increased, and the hopeless pauperism which formerly reigned in the island had disappeared. Such had been the consequences of a generous and sympathizing policy during the last two decades.

Then the Fenian conspiracy broke out. Upon a right appreciation of that conspiracy, declared Mr. Disraeli, depended the question whether the policy about to be adopted by Mr. Gladstone was a wise, just, and necessary policy, or whether it was a policy most dangerous and fatal to the country. The Fenian conspiracy was an entirely foreign conspiracy. It did not arise from Ireland, and it was supported very slightly from Ireland. The whole plan and all the resources came from abroad; and the people of Ireland, as a people, repudiated the conspiracy. “From the commencement,” said Mr. Disraeli, “the persons who got up the conspiracy—the originators and abettors of it—were persons influenced

by obsolete traditions as to the condition of Ireland and the temper of the Irish people; and when they applied their preparations to Ireland, they found out the great mistake they had made in assuming that they were dealing with Ireland as it was at the commencement of the century. No doubt there are people in Ireland who *will at all times sympathize with a political movement of any kind. A very lively people, with not too much to do and little variety of pursuit, will always have among them a class of persons ready to busy themselves with any mischief that is going on.* There is a certain class in Ireland who are in the habit of saying what they do not mean, and of doing that which they never intended. But no class of any importance, no individuals of any importance, ever sanctioned the Fenian movement; they repudiated it; they felt that it was an anachronism, that it originated in obsolete traditions, and was devised by people who were perfectly unaware that the Ireland upon which they were operating was the Ireland in which there had been the portentous revolution I have referred to.

“If this view be correct, I say that the inference I have a right to draw is this—that the Fenian conspiracy having been completely baffled, having been met, I hope I may be allowed to say, with courage and wisdom, and having been completely put down, it ought to have been allowed to pass away, and that the improvement in the condition of Ireland ought to have been permitted to proceed; so that in the course of time, in another ten or even twenty years—and what are twenty years in the history of a very ancient nation like Ireland, and a nation which has passed through such vicissitudes?—we had a right to believe that Ireland would have been in much the same condition as England or Scotland.”

But now, deplored Mr. Disraeli, a Liberal government had stepped in, resolved upon rescinding the whole policy of conciliation carried on for the last thirty or forty years.

The Fenian conspiracy, it declared, was a proof that the whole country was in a state of disaffection, and therefore some plan must be adopted to propitiate the Irish nation.* Hence the bill to abolish the Protestant Church in Ireland; hence that measure of great change and great disturbance—for it was impossible to have great change without great disturbance. He would not, continued Mr. Disraeli, repeat the general objections he had before brought forward against the bill. He still considered it a revolutionary measure; that it weakened the character of civil power by divorcing it from the religious principle which had hitherto strengthened and consecrated it; and that it was a measure which would not increase the confidence in property in England. All those opinions he still held, though having before expressed them he should now be silent upon them. Yet he had full right to ask, would the abolition of the Protestant Church and the confiscation of its revenues restore tranquillity and contentment to Ireland? He was sure they would not. Ireland was in a lawless condition, and outrages on men and cattle were of frequent occurrence; yet in the most disturbed districts the Protestant clergyman was not shot at, his barns and ricks were not burnt, and his cattle stood in their stalls unmaimed. "If," asked Mr. Disraeli, and the question was a difficult one for the government to answer, "If the persons who commit these outrages are discontented with the

landlord or with the class to which he belongs, and prove their discontent in the manner that has lately been exhibited, why should they not assault the clergyman if they are discontented with him or with the class to which he belongs? But, on the contrary, the clergyman is in a state of complete security; he makes no complaint of the circumstances of the locality in which he passes his existence; and so far as his letters are concerned, you would never suppose that his country was disturbed."

The proposal to abolish the Irish Church, he frankly avowed, was nothing less than a pandering to socialism. The property of the Protestant Church was to be confiscated because the Roman Catholic Church was discontented. "What does that amount to?" asked Mr. Disraeli. "To a recognition of the principles of socialism. A man comes forward and says, 'I am a poor man, and I am discontented because another man has an estate and a park. I do not want his estate and park, because I know that every man cannot expect to have an estate and a park; but take them away from that other man and my political views are met.' Well, that is socialism, and it is the policy which Her Majesty's ministers now propose to adopt."

The House had no evidence before it, continued Mr. Disraeli, to justify or even to colour the great changes which were proposed. The course the government were pursuing would outrage the feelings and sensibly injure the interest of a considerable portion of the Irish nation. It would break up the system of general conciliation which in the past had been pursued. It would be *the precursor of a similar revolution in the tenure of land*. It would encourage the policy of Rome to convert Ireland into a Popish kingdom. There would be feuds between the Protestant element and the Catholic element for ascendancy; there would be feuds between the landlords and the peasantry as to the ownership of the soil; the power of the

* "The Irish people were assumed to have a real grievance. Agitators, it was said, took advantage of it to stir the chronic discontent with English rule. Let the grievances be removed, and they would be satisfied and loyal. For a hundred years this had been the theory of the English Liberal party. The events so far had not corresponded to it, for the whole history of the century had been a history of concession, and the discontent was wide and defiant as ever. The attempt, however, was to be made once more. The English people do not see that to remove even just grounds of complaint is made useless by the form in which the concession is made. They never legislate beforehand with a desire to be just; they wait for rebellion or danger of it, and then they yield without dignity and without deliberation. What they give is accepted without gratitude, and is regarded only as a victory won in the campaign which is being fought for the independence of Ireland."—*English in Ireland*, vol. iii., p. 576.

crown would lose its hold upon the people; and the unity of the Union would be endangered.

"You are commencing a policy," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "which will inevitably lead to such results. It was because we thought the policy of the right hon. gentleman would lead to such results that we opposed it on principle; but when the House, by a commanding majority, resolved that the policy should be adopted, we did not think it consistent with our duty to retire from the great business before us, and endeavoured to devise amendments to this bill, which I do not say would have effected our purpose, but which at least might have softened the feelings, spared the interests, and saved the honour of those who were attacked by the bill. In considering these amendments, we were most scrupulous to propose nothing that could counteract and defeat the main principles of the policy of the right hon. gentleman. We felt that to do that would be to trifle with the House, would not be what was due to the right hon. gentleman, and could not effect the purpose we had before us. There was not an amendment which, on the part of my friends, I placed on the table that was not scrupulously drawn up with this consideration; there was not one of those amendments which, in my opinion, the right hon. gentleman might not have accepted, and yet have carried his main policy into effect. What the effect of carrying these amendments might have been I pretend not now to say; but at least if they had been carried, or if the right hon. gentleman himself had modified his bill in unison with their spirit, there was a chance of our coming to some conclusion which would have given some hope for the future.

"I ask the House to recollect at this moment the tone and spirit in which these amendments were received. Rash in its conception, in its execution arrogant, the policy of the right hon. gentleman, while it has secured the triumph of a party, has

outraged the feelings of a nation. If the right hon. gentleman had met us in the spirit in which we met him, at any rate we should have shown the Protestants of Ireland that whatever might be the opinion of the majority upon the state necessity of the policy of the government, there was a desire in parliament to administer it in a spirit of conciliation towards those who, as all must acknowledge, are placed in a position of almost unexampled difficulty and pain. But not the slightest encouragement was given to us; no advance on our part was even accepted by the right hon. gentleman, who has insisted on the hard principle of his measure; and it has become my duty upon this, the last day, to comment upon the character of that principle and the possible consequences of its adoption. I know very well the difficult position in which we are placed to-night; I know very well it would be more convenient if we did not ask for the opinion of the House to-night, and allow this third reading to pass unchallenged; but I confess I could not reconcile that course with my sense of public duty. If this bill be what I believe it to be, it is one that we ought to protest against to the last; and we cannot protest against it in a manner more constitutional, more parliamentary, more satisfactory to our constituencies and to the nation, than by going to a vote upon it.

"We know very well you will have a great party triumph, a large majority, and we shall have what is called 'loud and continued cheering.' But remember this that when Benjamin Franklin's mission was rejected* there was loud and continued cheering, and lords of the privy council waved their hats and tossed them in the air. But that was the commencement of one of the greatest

* Benjamin Franklin, at the time of the dispute between England and the American colonies, was provincial agent in England. He was a warm opponent of the Stamp Act, as his examination at the bar of the House of Commons plainly reveals. At the outset of the contest he was truly desirous of effecting a reconciliation between the mother country and the colonies; but on finding his efforts useless he returned to Philadelphia.

struggles this country ever embarked in; it was the commencement of a series of the greatest disasters England ever experienced. And I would recommend the House to feel at this moment—this solemn moment—that this is not a question like the paper duty, not a party division on some colonial squabble; we are going, if we agree to this bill to-night, so far as the House of Commons is concerned, to give a vote which will be the most responsible public act that any man on either side of the House ever gave. You may have a great majority now, you may cheer, you may indulge in all the jubilation of party triumph; but this is a question as yet only begun, and the time will come, and come ere long, when those who have taken a part in the proceedings of this House to-night, whatever may be their course and whatever their decision, will look upon it as one of the gravest incidents of their lives, as the most serious scene at which they have ever assisted. I hope that when that time shall come, none of us on either side of the House will feel that he has by his vote contributed to the disaster of his country."

In reply Mr. Gladstone declared that he was only carrying into effect the policy of the authors of the Union, who had pledged themselves to establish religious equality in Ireland. He also denied that his measure was harsh and illiberal. "The church," he said in conclusion, "may have much to regret in respect to temporal splendour, yet the day is to come when it will be said of her, as of the temple of Jerusalem, that 'The glory of the latter house is greater than that of the former;' and when the most loyal and faithful of her children will learn not to forget that at length the parliament of England took courage, and the Irish Church was disestablished and disendowed." On a division there appeared, for the third reading, 361; against, 247—majority, 114.

The bill upon being sent to the Upper House was met at first with some show of opposition; but the peers, aware that the

nation was in favour of the measure, thought it now prudent not to repeat the tactics of last year, and after certain compromises had been agreed upon, gave their sanction that the Protestant Church in Ireland be disestablished and disendowed. It was on this occasion that Lord Derby raised his voice for the last time, in the chamber which had so frequently resounded with his fiery eloquence, in denunciation of the measure. "My lords," he said, "I am an old man, and, like many of your lordships, past the allotted span of threescore years and ten. My official life is at an end, my political life is nearly closed, and in the course of nature my natural life cannot be long." He thus concluded:—"If it be for the last time that I have the honour of addressing your lordships, I declare that it will be to my dying day a satisfaction that I have been able to lift up my voice against the adoption of a measure, the political impolicy of which is equalled only by its moral iniquity." Lord Derby died October 23, 1869, in the seventy-second year of his age. "He will long live," said the *Times*, "in memory as one of the most remarkable and indeed irresistible men of our time—a man privately beloved and publicly admired, who showed extraordinary cleverness in many ways; was the greatest orator of his day; and was the most brilliant, though not the most successful, parliamentary leader of the last half century."

It is easy to be "wise after the event," as Mr. Disraeli more than once said; but to be wise before the event is statesmanship of the highest order. It is melancholy to think how all the prophecies given forth by Mr. Disraeli and the other representatives of the Conservative party as to the consequences that would ensue from the downfall of the Protestant Church in Ireland have been fulfilled. It was predicted that the disestablishment of the Irish Church would weaken the power of the crown in Ireland; at no time in the history of Ireland has the royal supremacy been more openly disregarded and set at defiance than during

the last ten years. It was predicted that Rome would wield an authority over the island such as the Papacy had seldom before exercised; never has Ireland been more submissive to the behests of the Vatican than she has been during the last ten years. It was predicted that by the disestablishment of the Protestant clergy, the Irish peasantry would lose the help afforded them by landlords who were well to do, who were sympathetic, and who were always resident; many of the Protestant clergy on receiving their compensation allowances have quitted the country and entered upon colonial or continental chaplaincies, thus leaving the Irish peasant to the tender mercies of an impoverished and scheming priesthood. It was predicted that Ireland, having found that a course of intimidation was the only method to obtain her ends, would, on the overthrow of the Irish Protestant Church, make other demands upon the state, and press her suit by menace; recent events have plainly revealed the nature of the demands of Ireland and the resources Irishmen have adopted to enforce obedience to their requests.

All that was foretold has come to pass. The Irish Church has been disestablished and disendowed, without affording any satisfaction to the Roman Catholic hierarchy or the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland. The peasant has raised his voice in angry tones for the land until we see rents unpaid, landowners unable to obtain labour, the murder of unarmed and helpless squires, the mutilation of cattle, and the reign of terror introduced by the Land League in full swing. What a picture for a civilized country to gaze upon! The crown scorned and defied, the law set at nought and made contemptible, the right of property assailed, the safety of the person no longer respected, trade at a complete standstill, a nation sunk in the grossest superstition, whose policy is communism, whose industry is spoliation, and whose law is resistance—these are the advantages which a Liberal government has offered to

Ireland; these are the means by which the difficulties of the situation have been surmounted; these are the results of a Liberal interference, first with the church and next with the land, which was to quell disturbance and promote content. The Conservative party proved themselves indeed wise before the event; yet it must be a miserable pride that can find any consolation in seeing how faithfully what had been predicted has been carried out.

With the enrolment of the Irish Church bill on the statute-book the legislative labours of Mr. Disraeli during the session came to an end. Mr. Disraeli took no part in the discussion of the assessed rating act, which removed a grievance that had long been complained of; and he was equally silent on the settlement of the bankruptcy question, on the abolition of imprisonment for debt, on the endowed schools bill, and on the repeal of the fire insurance duties. As leader of the Opposition, and supported by such able lieutenants as Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Mr. Ward Hunt, and Sir John Pakington, there was no necessity for him to busy himself with the minor matters of legislation. His system showed signs of nervous exhaustion, and his medical adviser had recommended him rest and quiet. He absented himself from the public gaze, and whilst enjoying the rural charms of Hughenden was no doubt conjuring up before his mind the grace of a Corisande, the religious fervour of a Miss Arundel, the charms of a strong-minded Theodora, and the vacillations of a Lothair, which next year were to excite in no ordinary manner the interest of the social and literary world. During this period of repose only once, save when he touched upon purely local topics in his own county, did Mr. Disraeli address himself to an audience outside the House of Commons.

On the occasion of a banquet at the Trinity House, which was attended by the members of the cabinet, and by several of the more prominent among the Opposition, Mr. Disraeli was present. Here it fell to his lot to

administer a sharp rebuke to Mr. Lowe, who, with his customary aggressive vulgarity, had introduced political subjects at a non-political dinner. It was at the moment when the Irish Church bill was being discussed in the House of Lords, and the peers, in suggesting their various amendments, had, according to Mr. Lowe, placed the House of Commons in a very painful position. "The clear and definite outline we had drawn," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "becomes blurred and indistinct; all sorts of—I will not say tricks—experiments are tried on our performance; and we are compelled to stand by with our arms folded to watch this excruciating process, without being allowed to interpose a word. That is no doubt a painful position for the House of Commons to be in; but the darkest night is nearest the dawn, and we console ourselves with the reflection that after these alterations have been made in our performance it will return to us, and we shall have to give it the final touch. And we are not without hope that we may be enabled to reform what has been blurred, to restore the outline and make the picture, if not exactly the same as before, yet so much the same, at least, as to be satisfactory in all points of view." There had been no necessity for Mr. Lowe to make any allusion to the Irish Church bill; but he knew he was in the presence of several distinguished members of the Opposition, and his genial nature could not refuse the opportunity of gratuitously giving vent to a little spite. For this exhibition of uncalled-for malice Mr. Disraeli very properly took Mr. Lowe to task. Speaking in the name of the honorary brethren, he said, "Perhaps in the execution of your duties, Mr. Deputy Master, you may experience cares and anxieties not less than those which the chancellor of the exchequer has with so much tact and taste recalled to our recollection, and sure I am you will feel this. Whatever may be your public duties, you may encounter them successfully with the temper and forbearance which generally in

public affairs meet their due reward; and you may feel sure in the transactions of public life, that there is no wise rule that it is more sedulously our duty to observe than this—that it is unwise to introduce difficult subjects upon which men may differ, when it is unnecessary to obtrude them on public notice." The rebuke was richly deserved, and was unanimously cheered by the assembled guests.

At the opening of parliament by commission the following year (February 8, 1870), Mr. Disraeli came forward to criticise the policy of the government. He confined himself almost entirely to the condition of Ireland, in which unhappy island discontent and agitation were as rife as ever, and where dangerous efforts had been made for the release of the imprisoned Fenians. In spite of the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the promises of the government to introduce a land bill, agrarian outrages still continued, and unpopular landlords were ruthlessly shot down by masked men from behind hedges. The clergy desired further concessions to be made to them, the Protestant party were sullen and irritated, whilst the peasantry, excited at the prospect of a land bill, raised their voices in urging the most outrageous demands. The newspapers were full of treason and disaffection, and the turbulent and unscrupulous Fenian was the hero of the hour. So glaring was the agitation that it had to be noticed in the speech from the throne. "The recent extension of agrarian crime," said the commissioners, "in several parts of Ireland, with its train of accompanying evils, has filled Her Majesty with painful concern."

To what cause, asked Mr. Disraeli, could that sad state of things be attributed? One by one the grievances put forward as the very source and fountain-head of Irish revolt had been removed or redressed. Justice was not mal-administered, ecclesiastical equality had been established, a once seditious priesthood had ranged themselves as the supporters of a Liberal govern-

ment, and organized agitation had been checked. The cause of all that disturbance, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, was not the agitator, not the Fenian, but the Irishman, who had misinterpreted the policy of the government. He had rushed into a state of "riotous hallucination." He had suddenly assumed that a great change was about to occur in his position—a change which, if it were accomplished, would destroy civilization and resolve society into its original elements. Yet was not Ireland justified, he inquired, in putting that erroneous interpretation on the policy of the government? Had ministers taken any steps to remove that false impression, and to guide the mind of the Irish people to a right conception of the state of affairs and a due appreciation of the intentions of the government? The policy of Mr. Gladstone had been openly and frankly avowed. The prime minister had declared that the state of Ireland was due to Protestant ascendancy, and that it was his mission to put an end to Protestant ascendancy. Protestant ascendancy, Mr. Gladstone had said, was at the bottom of all the disorders and all the grievances and misery of Ireland; it was a tree which had produced three branches of "predominant perniciousness," extending into the church, the land, and the education of the country.

Consequent upon those statements of the prime minister, continued Mr. Disraeli, there had sprung up in the mind of Ireland an idea that the destruction of Protestant ascendancy was connected with the Fenian conspiracy. Irishmen argued that if it had not been for Fenianism the Protestant Church in Ireland, which they had been educated to believe was a "badge of conquest" and a "source of infamy," would still have been in existence. Hence a feeling of gratitude had arisen in the island towards those Fenians who had been captured by the government, and who were paying the penalty of their agitation by imprisonment. Petitions poured in upon the government, praying for the release of

the prisoners. The government adopted half measures. It issued a partial amnesty, and certain Fenians were liberated from gaol. Naturally those still in confinement murmured against so invidious an act, and also demanded their liberty. Addresses from amnesty associations, requesting a general release of all Fenian captives, were sent to the government, but refused; and to such refusals were to be traced the agitation that had ensued, the increase of crime and outrage in Ireland, and the necessity to despatch troops from England to be quartered in the disaffected districts. The disestablishment of the Irish Church was already beginning to bear its evil fruit. "The Irish people," said Mr. Disraeli, "naturally thought that with the destruction of the Protestant Church the offences of these imprisoned men ought to be condoned. That is the reason why you have such a strong feeling among the Irish people on behalf of the Fenians, and that is the real cause why you have had all this terrible excitement in Ireland, and why you have been called upon to do an act which would be a blow to all government—namely, without security, and on no intelligible plea, suddenly to open the gates of all the prisons of the country, and free men who were condemned by the solemn verdict of juries, and after trials the justice and impartiality of which have certainly never been impugned even by the Fenians themselves."

So much, exclaimed the leader of the Opposition, for the first great cause which had brought about the condition then complained of in Ireland. But there was also another great cause well deserving of consideration. The freeing of the political prisoners was to be followed by the freeing of the land. What had been predicted was to take place: first the destruction of the church, then the destruction of the system of land tenure. The Irish, explained Mr. Disraeli, argued somewhat after this fashion:—"The Irish Church is abolished; the bishops and rectors are deprived of

their property. The next grievance is the land. *Is it not a natural consequence that if you settle the question of the Irish Church by depriving the bishops and rectors of their property, you will settle the question of the land by depriving the landlords of their property?*" That of course, they all knew, was not the policy of the government; but it was none the less the inference of the Irish people. So confident were the Irish of an analogous policy being applied to the land to that which had been applied to the church, that they had openly declared that nothing short of perpetuity of tenure would be satisfactory. Nor, complained the speaker, had the government taken measures to correct that false impression. Irish members went about the country, the lord-lieutenant himself held a public meeting on the subject, and it was openly avowed that fixity of tenure was the only reform that would satisfy the nation. "We must be firm," was the cry, "we are sure to get what we want if we are firm; but nothing must satisfy you except fixity of tenure." Yet all the while the government had not attempted to contradict that view, or to guide the ignorant peasant to the right path. It was not until their own candidate—the late law adviser of the castle [a Mr. Heron]—was defeated, that ministers began actively to bestir themselves.

"Horrible scenes of violence," said Mr. Disraeli, "had all this time been occurring in Ireland, but the government would never move. Landlords were shot down like game; respectable farmers were beaten to death with sticks by masked men; bailiffs were shot in the back; policemen were stabbed; the high sheriff of a county, going to swear in the grand jury, was fired at in his carriage and dangerously wounded; households were blown up, and fire-arms surreptitiously obtained. All this time the government would not move; but the moment the government candidate was defeated on the hustings—a government candidate pledged to confiscation, pledged to a course of

action which would destroy all civil government—the moment that occurred there was a panic at the castle, there was confusion in the council; the wires of Aldershot were agitated, troops were put in motion, sent across from Liverpool to Dublin, and concentrated in Waterford, Tipperary, and Cork. And all this because the candidate who was prepared to support the government had lost his election." Indeed Mr. Disraeli did not hesitate to declare that the Liberal government, when it suited their own ends, had stimulated disaffection in Ireland; and it was only when such disaffection was prejudicial to the interests of their party that they resolved to repress it, and govern the island with troops and artillery.

Nor was this accusation unsupported by evidence. The lord-lieutenant of Ireland had gone about the country advocating fixity of tenure, alluding to the "glories of Vinegar Hill," and supporting his views by the most incendiary speeches; yet he had never been reprimanded, simply because his offensive words and actions were of service to the Liberal cause. Colonel Greville-Nugent had been raised to the peerage by Mr. Gladstone, and the son had succeeded to the seat of the father, pledged to promote complete amnesty for the Fenian prisoners and fixity of tenure, or, in plain English, the transferring of one man's property to another. The late law-adviser of the castle was the government candidate, and he came forward, it was said, attired in a green scarf to address his constituents. "I know nothing," said Mr. Disraeli, amid much laughter, "of the green scarf which he is said to have worn; but I think it highly probable that he did attire himself in that way, for his mind seems thoroughly permeated with that hue, as appears from all his observations." Whether Mr. Heron wore a green scarf or not, the views he held were certainly curious for one who posed as a government candidate. If he was not a Fenian, he was a fair imitation of one.

He came forward as the advocate of the immediate release of the Fenian prisoners, he gave three cheers for the prisoners, he tickled his audience with revolutionary doctrines, and of course he was in favour of fixity of tenure. Happening, however, to be opposed by a real Fenian (O'Donovan Rossa), Mr. Heron was defeated. "It is astonishing," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "what a preference is always given to the genuine article."

In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli said that if the measure the government intended shortly to introduce respecting the tenure of land in Ireland would be a just and prudent measure, it would receive the cordial support of himself and his party. If they were to have a bill on the tenure of land brought in, it ought to be considered free from party feelings, and with the anxious desire, not to satisfy the wild vagaries of the Irish people, but to lay the foundation of the future welfare and prosperity of Ireland. "But," said Mr. Disraeli, in his most solemn tones, "I do wish to impress upon the House the great responsibility which they incur on this subject. This is still a new House of Commons. Men have entered it who are proud, and justly proud, to be members of such an assembly; but they may depend on it, that if they do not resolve to consider the question of Irish government not only in a large but a firm spirit—if they think it possible that the spirit and sense of the people of England will long endure the chronic state of disturbance that now prevails in Ireland—they are much mistaken. And they may be equally certain that when this parliament comes to a conclusion, which they had entered with so much pride and with so much justifiable self-complacency, if they err in the course they take on this question—if they sanction a policy which, if unchecked, must lead to the dismemberment of the empire and even to the partial dissolution of society—they will look back on the day they entered parliament with very different feelings

from those which now influence them, and they will remember this House of Commons with dismay and remorse."

After a few words from Mr. Gladstone denying the inferences which the leader of the Opposition had drawn from the policy of the government, the address was agreed to without opposition.

The system of land tenure in Ireland was, as Mr. Disraeli had more than once admitted, far from satisfactory. It was based on injustice to the tenant, and gave rise to grievances which demanded the interference of the legislature. "I consider," said Mr. Bright, "this Irish land question one of the greatest and most difficult that was ever considered by an administrator, or that ever was submitted to a parliament." The land was in the hands of very few proprietors, and the tenant was a tenant-at-will. The landlord received his rent, and did little to the soil; the tenant was content if he could pay his rent, and generally declined to put any surplus he might possess into the land, since he enjoyed no security that he would be recouped for any improvements he effected. On the contrary, it was far from improbable that if the tenant greatly improved his property, the rent would be raised or placed in the hands of a more desirable occupier. Added to this injustice, since the cultivation of land was almost the only industry of the country there was excessive competition for every patch of ground; and thus the struggle for life and the means of living placed the tenant almost at the mercy of the proprietor of the soil. Such briefly was the Irish land question.

The attention of the country had more than once been directed to the evils which prevailed across St. George's Channel. In 1833 the House of Commons had been called upon to consider the grievous position of the occupiers of the soil in Ireland. So impressed had been Sir Robert Peel with the evils complained of, that in 1843 he appointed a commission—the well-known Devon commission—to inquire

into the subject of the occupation of land in Ireland. Two years later the report of the commission was issued, and the late Lord Derby strongly urged upon the government of the day to act upon the recommendations of that commission. His advice was, however, not followed. "Now," said Mr. Gladstone, "had those recommendations been acted upon at the time, it is probable that at this moment no Irish land question would be before the House for discussion. I do not say they would have removed every difficulty, but certainly they would have removed so much of the difficulty that the removal of the remainder would have been easily and promptly accomplished." Since the date of that commission legislation had interested itself in Irish matters, but without any good result. The Encumbered Estates Act, which had been passed to relieve impoverished Irish landlords of their burdens and to introduce capital into the country, had worked more harm than good; the Irish poor law bill had failed to grapple with the pauperism of the island; and emigration, which was banishment under another name, had been looked upon with aversion by the Irish peasant, who more than any other peasantry is fondly attached to the soil of his country.

These evils the Liberal party had resolved to redress. There had been no secret that the disestablishment of the Irish Church was to be followed by an Irish land bill. During the past autumn and winter Liberal members had wandered from one town to another, openly declaring that at the commencement of the ensuing session the first important question which would attract the attention of the government would be the settlement of land in Ireland. "We propose," said Mr. Bright, "a new conquest of Ireland without confiscation and without blood, with only the holy weapon of a frank and a generous justice, which is everywhere potent to bring together nations which have been long separated by oppression and neglect. Now, from this new policy

we hope for great changes in Ireland; not that Ireland is to be made a paradise, but that Ireland shall be greatly improved. It may be—probably it is, or will seem like—the language of great exaggeration if I quote the lines of Pope in one of the most exquisite poems in our language:—

'Then crime shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail,

Returning Justice lift aloft her scale,

Peace o'er her realm her olive wand extend,

And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend.'

I say that this may appear the language of great exaggeration; but if we are able to suppress conspiracy, if we are able to banish agrarian crime, if we can unbar the prison doors, if we can reduce all excess of military force, if we can make Ireland as tranquil as England and Scotland now are—then, at least, I think we may have done something to justify the wisdom and statesmanship of our time."

To this "new policy" the Conservative party had no objection, provided the Liberal land bill ushered in reform, and not confiscation. "Let," they cried, "the claim of the tenant be admitted and respected; but, on the other hand, the proprietary rights of the landlords must be firmly maintained." Much interest was therefore excited as to the manner in which the government would deal with the difficulty; and when Mr. Gladstone, the week after the opening of parliament, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, the House was crowded in every part. Nor was this interest not unmingled with fear. As the disestablishment of the Irish Church was looked upon as the forerunner of the disestablishment of the Church of England, so it was thought that a change in the land laws of Ireland might also pave the way for a change in the land laws of England. Briefly summarized the measure of Mr. Gladstone was as follows:—It proposed the enlargement of the power of the limited owner in regard both to lease and rate;

aid was to be granted by loans of public money to occupiers disposed to purchase the cultivated lands in their possession, where the landlords were willing to sell; facilities were also to be given to landlords by means of loans to prepare waste land for occupation, by the making of roads and the erection of necessary buildings; such transactions were to be managed by the board of works in Dublin. As strict freedom of contract had been proved to be a great evil, it might be necessary to prescribe by law in certain respects the terms and conditions on which land might be held in Ireland. With regard to occupation, the new law would be administered by a court of arbitration and a civil bill court (which would be the civil side of the court of quarter-sessions, and presided over by an assistant-barrister), with an appellate tribunal consisting of two, and in case of necessity three, judges of assize; the judges having power to reserve a case for a court for land cases in Dublin, to be composed of equity and common law judges.

"At present," said Mr. Gladstone, "there are four descriptions of holdings in Ireland which I have thought it my duty to keep specially in view. The first of these is the Ulster custom.* This custom, where it exists, the bill will convert into a law, to which the new courts will give effect. The second class of holdings are those which prevail under customs and usages other than that of Ulster; and these too are to be legalized, subject to the restriction that the tenant may claim the benefit of them as an absolute right only in cases where he is disturbed in his tenancy by the act of his landlord, if he has not been

* The Ulster custom was the tenant-right system with variations. So long as a man paid his rent he was allowed to remain the occupier of his holding; on giving up his land he was entitled to claim compensation for unexhausted improvements, and was at liberty to sell the good-will of his farm for what it would command in the market. The Ulster system was only a custom, though exercising something like the force of law. The bill of Mr. Gladstone, as we see, developed the custom into a legal institution. It failed, however, to define the Ulster custom, since that custom was not capable of definition. The Ulster custom varied in different districts, and even on different estates, in the same county.

evicted for non-payment of rent, and has not sub-let or sub-divided his holding without the landlord's consent. All arrears of rent and all damages done by the tenant to the farm may be pleaded by the landlord as a set-off, and the landlord may bar the pleading of any such custom, if he chooses to give his tenant a lease for not less than thirty-one years."

Where the buildings were not connected with any custom, there would be a scale of damages for evictions. In cases of eviction the following would be the scale:— If the holding was not valued in the public valuation over £10 a year, the judge might award the holder a sum not exceeding seven years' rent; between £10 and £50 a year, a sum not exceeding five years' rent; between £50 and £100 a year, a sum not exceeding three years' rent; and above £100 a year, not exceeding two years' rent.

For the purpose of promoting improvements, advances of money would be authorized to landlords, to enable them to defray any charge raised against them in the way of improvement in the case of tenants retiring by an act of their own. The principle on which Mr. Gladstone proposed to deal with improvements was, that they must have a rentable value and be suitable to the holdings, and the burden of proof would be laid on the landlords. In other words, improvements would be the work of the tenant, and the landlord was to show that they were not necessary; and the measure would not be limited to future improvements, but would be extended to those already made. No claim would be allowed for any improvement made twenty years before the passing of the Act, unless it was an improvement of the nature of a permanent building, or a reclamation of land.

With regard to lands under lease, a landlord might exempt his lands from being subject to any custom except the Ulster custom, provided that he agreed to give his tenant a lease for thirty-one years;

but the lease was to leave to the tenant at the close of that term a right to claim compensation under three heads—tillages and manures, permanent buildings, and reclamation of lands.

From the moment the bill passed every Irishman would be absolutely responsible for every contract into which he entered. Non-payment of rent would be held as a bar to any claim on the landlord, reserving, however, discretion to the courts in certain cases. Notices to quit would have to be for twelve months instead of six, and dated from the last day of the current year. In conclusion, the county cess was to be assimilated to the poor-rate. In every new tenancy it would have to be paid in moieties by landlord and tenant as the poor-rate was then paid, and in every old tenancy of £4 a year the occupier would be at once relieved.

There was no opposition on the first reading of the bill. In the absence of Mr. Disraeli, owing to temporary indisposition, Mr. Gathorne Hardy again undertook the duties of the leader of the Opposition. He refrained from discussion until the details of the bill were before the House. It was, however, his wish and that of the Conservative party generally, he said, to deal with the measure in a candid and conciliatory spirit.

The scheme of Mr. Gladstone possessed one great advantage; it was very simple and easy to be understood. The slowest mind could without difficulty grasp what the Irish land bill proposed to do. It upset the theory that the landlord was the absolute master of his property, in admitting the tenant to a certain partnership in the land he cultivated. The tenant had the power to claim compensation for improvements when disturbed in the possession of his land, and all improvements were judged the work of the tenant unless the landlord could show cause to the contrary. In fact, the clauses of the bill were drawn up with the one object, that as long as the tenant paid his rent he should not as a rule be turned out of his holding; and even when

turned out he should be entitled to full compensation for all substantial improvements he had effected.

So far so good; but on a closer examination of the details of the measure the Conservative party found certain objections, which they did not hesitate to bring forward. First, it was complained that the Ulster tenant right had not been clearly defined; and the absence of such explanation would lead to great difficulties. "If it was left," said Mr. Henley, "to the courts of law to determine what was the principle of tenant right in each particular case of dispute, all he could say was God help the tenants and the landlords who fell into the hands of the lawyers to settle the meaning of custom or usage." Then the clauses as to "disturbance" and "eviction" were disapproved of. It was declared that the bill left the landlord in such a position that his tenants might be doing every act which they ought not to do, and yet the law left the owner no power of interference, except under a penalty which in many cases might be ruinous. No man, it was said, could call himself master of his own land if he could not remove a tenant except by paying a certain portion of the value of the land. In forcing from the landlord the fine on eviction they were, *pro tanto*, confining the right of the landlord with regard to his property. The bill, too, it was argued, put a penalty upon the indulgent landlord, and gave a premium to the hard and grasping landlord. The Ulster tenant right was also considered both stupid and unjust. "It was stupid," it was said, "because it professed to give a man an interest in the land, whereas it really made him bury his capital during the whole time of his occupation, and in all probability prevented him from cultivating the land as he should cultivate it. Again, as to selling the goodwill of the farm, the tenant was selling that which he had no right to sell, and therefore the custom was unjust." Yet the creation of a system analogous to the Ulster tenant right was attempted by the bill of

Mr. Gladstone. The principle also was questioned of presuming that all improvements were the work of the tenant, unless the landlord could prove the contrary. As a matter of fact, it was argued that improvements were seldom solely the work of the tenant; in the majority of cases, though the tenant supplied the manual labour, the materials required for the improvements were furnished by the landlord. It was also suggested that there should be a limit in point of time, after which the tenant should not be entitled to claim compensation for improvements. It was feared that the bill would introduce an enormous amount of litigation. Ireland, under the provisions of the bill, would, it was said, be very much like a cow with the landlords holding the horns, the tenants the tail, whilst the lawyers filled their pails with the milk. Still, in spite of these objections, Mr. Gladstone had no reason to complain of the reception his measure had met with.

Mr. Disraeli did not address the House until at the close of the debate on the second reading (March 11, 1870). The bill, he said, was not an agricultural, but a political bill. He did not mean that it was a revolutionary bill; but it was a bill the object of which was, not to improve the cultivation of land, but to improve the relations between important classes of Her Majesty's subjects. And he congratulated the Irish landlords as a body of coming so well out of the inquiry. "Now, sir," he said, "a minister who would come forward and propose to deal—to meddle, I would rather say—with the relations between landlord and tenant, would undertake a task from which, I think, the most experienced and most resolute man would shrink, unless there was an urgent necessity of state for doing it. I myself acknowledge that the circumstances of Ireland are such as not only to justify the minister, but to call upon him to ask the attention of Parliament to this question, and invite it to come to some decision upon it. Sir, I will

not enter, or attempt to enter, into the long catalogue of the various and complicated causes which have brought Ireland, so far as the relations between the proprietor and the occupier of the soil are concerned, into such a position that it becomes the duty of the minister and of parliament to legislate, or propose to legislate, upon the subject. But although I shrink from, and from fear of wearying the House avoid that topic, I may be permitted, I hope—speaking, as I trust I shall to-night, with the utmost impartiality, and not appearing here, as some hon. gentlemen do, as the advocate either of the tenant or the landlord in particular—I hope I may be allowed to congratulate the landlords of Ireland upon this, that the result of all these investigations, of this protracted discussion, and of the scrutinizing mind of the public of this country being brought to bear on this subject, has been that it has greatly cleared their reputation and strengthened their position. They cannot be accused of rapacity who, it is proved, receive a lower rent than the landlords of England; they cannot be accused of ruthlessness when the solitary instances, with pain and difficulty brought forward against them, are instances of a very few men of crazy imagination and conduct; and if we were to make a selection in England in the same spirit we might perhaps find a few individual proprietors influenced by similar feelings."

After eulogizing the accuracy and exhaustiveness of the report of the Devon commission, Mr. Disraeli turned upon Mr. Horsman, who had declared that ever since the issue of that report the land question in Ireland had been trifled with by successive ministries. "That is a very grave accusation to make against public men," said Mr. Disraeli. "Having been connected with two ministries who have endeavoured to deal with this question, who have given to its consideration great thought and labour, and who were prepared to stand or fall by the measures which they introduced, I must—though, I hope, with good temper—

utterly repudiate the imputation of the right hon. gentleman. And I am bound to say from what I know of public life, such as I can observe from my seat in this House, I have no reason to believe that those who sit opposite me, and who in the course of their career have also been responsible for bills to establish more satisfactory relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland—I say I do not believe,” continued Mr. Disraeli with his accustomed generosity, “that they were animated by any other spirit than we were. I cannot for one moment believe that they trifled with this question; but, on the other hand, I am confident that they gave to it all the pains which learning and research could bring to the solution of this difficult question, and that they were prepared to exert the utmost of their parliamentary influence to carry the result of their deliberations into effect. The right hon. gentleman the member for Liskeard [Mr. Horsman] was himself, I believe, secretary* to the lord-lieutenant for no brief period. I never understood that he introduced any bill with regard to the land of Ireland, or indeed brought in any bill upon any subject whatever connected with Ireland during his term of office. But we never placed upon the conduct of the right hon. gentleman that uncharitable interpretation which he has been pleased to place upon the conduct of those who fill both this and the opposite benches, who did attempt to deal with this question. Both sides of the House acknowledge that the right hon. gentleman the member for Liskeard is a *superior person*. When he did not introduce a bill upon the Irish land; when he did not during his tenure of office introduce a bill upon any subject whatever in connection with that country; when, on quitting office, he informed us, to my wonder and surprise and especially to the astonishment of the Earl of Mayo, that he had not brought forward

any measure on any subject whatever, because he found that his office was a complete sinecure, we, still knowing what a superior person the right hon. gentleman was, did not put an uncharitable interpretation on his conduct, but said, ‘This is a part of some profound policy which will end in the regeneration of Ireland and in the consolidation of Her Majesty’s United Kingdom.’”

Having finished baiting Mr. Horsman, much to the amusement of the House, the leader of the Opposition proceeded to show that, so far from the Conservative party having ignored the condition-of-Ireland question, they had, years before the introduction of Mr. Gladstone’s measure, endeavoured to settle Irish matters on a more satisfactory basis. When the Conservatives had been in power in 1852 four bills, adopting every recommendation of the Devon commission, and which formed a complete code as regards Ireland, had been brought forward. A change of government, however, prevented those measures then being discussed. Had they passed, there would have been no necessity for the debate on the present land bill. Yet, during the interval between 1852 and 1860, almost all the suggestions brought forward in those four Conservative bills had been adopted by the government of the day. The limited owner had been invested with power to make improvements and to charge them upon the inheritance; the leasing powers of the Irish proprietor had been extended; the limited owner had been permitted to enter into contracts with the tenant—all these changes had been suggested in the four measures advocated by the Conservative party, and all these changes had now become law. Again, every provision in the bill brought forward by the Conservative government in 1852, to regulate the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, had been accepted by the Liberals and inserted in their bill of 1860. One suggestion, however, the Liberals did not accept. They omitted that vital clause in the bill of

* Mr. Horsman was chief secretary for Ireland from 1855-57; he resigned on the ground that the work of the office was too light.

1852 which gave compensation to the tenant for improvements, and retrospective compensation. Nor had he, frankly avowed Mr. Disraeli, changed his opinions. In 1852 he had been in favour of giving compensation to the Irish tenant for his improvements, and within due limits and with necessary conditions of prudence and discretion he was in favour of retrospective compensation; and he was still influenced by those opinions. Those compensation clauses which had been suggested in the bill of 1852 he saw inserted in the measure now before the House, and that alone was sufficient for him to assent to the second reading of the bill.

Still, though he gave his assent to the principle of the bill, Mr. Disraeli did not approve of all its details. He did not approve of the provision which assumed that all past improvements had been made by the tenant, instead of by the landlord. Such a conclusion was an impolitic act, and would be an injustice to the landlord. The wisest course he suggested would be to fix the *onus probandi* on neither party. He also objected to the proposition of the government relating to the Ulster custom. "What," he asked, "is the first clause of the bill respecting the legality of what is called the Ulster tenant-right custom? It is neither more nor less than asking parliament to legalize the private arrangements of every estate in the North of Ireland. What is the Ulster custom? No one has pretended to tell us. There is no such thing as an Ulster custom. There are a variety of customs as respects tenant right in Ulster, as there are a great many such customs in the other parts of Ireland; but there is no gentleman who can tell us what the Ulster custom is. No one pretends that there is any custom of Ulster. There is no prescription, because it is too ancient; there is no certainty, because it varies under every rule. Then I want to know in what manner you will deal with this question of Ulster custom. Besides, even if it were a custom, I very

much doubt the propriety, as a general principle, of legalizing customs. *The moment you legalize a custom you fix its particular character; but the value of a custom is its flexibility, and that it adapts itself to all the circumstances of the moment and of the locality. All these qualities are lost the moment you crystallize a custom into legislation.* Customs may not be as wise as laws, but they are always more popular. They array upon their side alike the convictions and prejudices of men. They are spontaneous. They grow out of man's necessities and inventions; and as circumstances change and alter and die off, the custom falls into desuetude, and we get rid of it. But if you make it into a law, circumstances alter, but the law remains, and becomes part of that obsolete legislation which haunts our statute-book and harasses society. Therefore, I say, as a general principle, I am against legalizing customs. You cannot, if you are to legalize custom, legalize the custom of Ulster, because it does not exist. But if it did exist, what is the reason that you should have special legislation for the custom of Ulster? These agricultural customs exist in other parts of Ireland; you have provided for them in your bill. Why should there be two clauses—one for the Ulster and one for the other customs? Protesting against legalizing customs, I say that if the House in its wisdom decides upon that course, it will be expedient to get rid of this special legislation for Ulster, and to support a general clause upon the whole subject of legalizing the agricultural customs of Ireland."

Continuing his criticism, Mr. Disraeli said he objected to the clause in the bill relating to the compensation to be given for occupation: such a clause in his opinion terminated at *non propter alios morales relationes* between the farmer and his occupier. It was not possible to convert the relations between landlord and tenant into a purely commercial relation; there was something in the inevitable consequences of local circumstances and local influences that

would always prevent such a consummation. Still, even if such relationship were possible, it was a relationship that could never be established in the case of circumstances such as mainly existed in Ireland. If ever there was a state of society in which the relations between the landlord and tenant should be paternal, it was in a country where a man was the farmer of an acre and where a man paid two pounds for his annual rent. Under the old state of things the Irish landlord was the patron and the Irish tenant was his client; and if the tenant begged, owing to a bad season, to have his rent reduced or for a little delay in payment, he seldom appealed in vain to the facility and good-nature of the landlord. But under the present bill what inducement was there to the Irish landlord to show any consideration to his tenant? The tenant was no longer to be a client, but a coparcener with the landlord. He was to have as much interest in the estate as the landlord; and he had the power of claiming seven years' rent from his landlord, to be increased by at least three years' more, if he left to his landlord unexhausted improvements. What inducement then had the landlord to suffer inconvenience or to forbear from vindicating his rights? "Yet," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "this is the position in which you propose to place landlord and tenant for the future, terminating all those moral relations which have prevailed and even in the most unhappy times have been extensively exercised."

Mr. Disraeli also objected to that clause in the bill which was to permit advances of public money to be made to the Irish tenant, in order to help him to purchase the freehold. The object of the bill, said he, should be to make the Irish tenant more efficient, to make his tenure as secure as possible without trespassing on the legitimate rights of property, and to encourage him to dedicate and devote all his resources to the cultivation of the soil. Instead of pursuing those aims, the bill, if passed, would simply induce the

tenant to divert a portion of the capital which he ought to devote to the cultivation of the soil to the attainment of quite another object. No policy could be more unwise than one which tended to make, at the same time, of one man an *inefficient tenant and a poor proprietor*. It was perfectly true, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, ever prepared to find his own words thrown against him and to defend his consistency, that in the Conservative land bill, which had been prepared by Lord Mayo, there had been a provision to make advances to tenants under certain conditions. But what was the object of those advances? To assist the tenant in a better cultivation of the soil; to help him to drain his land, to fence it in, and to make buildings, and thus really to increase the capital devoted to the cultivation of the soil. A very different object from that which the present proposition of the government had in view!

After criticising the course proposed to be taken with reference to purchases under the Landed and Encumbered Estates Act, and after branding the bill of Mr. Gladstone as complicated, clumsy, and heterogeneous, Mr. Disraeli passed on to say a few words as to the tribunals proposed by the measure. He did not believe in the courts of arbitration that were to be established, and still less did he believe in the appeal to the assistant-barrister, who in consequence of the state of Irish society was "always careful to be non-resident," and who was perhaps ignorant of the difference between "a grass field and a field of young oats." But, if the decision of the courts of arbitration was unsatisfactory, and if the decision of the assistant-barrister was also unsatisfactory, the discontented suitor could appeal, and on appeal the case was to be tried before the judges of the assize.

"Well," observed Mr. Disraeli, "that sounds very grand and very satisfactory. There are few gentlemen on this or on the other side who do not know something of assizes and of the judges of assize. The judges of assize are men whose every hour

and half-hour are mapped out before they embark on their great enterprise. The judges of assize are on Monday in this town, on Wednesday in another town, and on Friday in a third. They are followed by an excited and ambitious bar, with their carriages and the railways full of briefs—full of the great trials which are coming on—causes which have engrossed and excited an anxious society for months, and from which they are to gain immortal honours—to be returned for boroughs, to be made solicitor-generals, and to rise to the highest positions on the bench. Well, when the judges come to the first town where those great exploits are to be fulfilled and those great feats accomplished, where multitudes are waiting to receive them, and where the galleries are full of ladies—particularly if the cases are of a delicate character—all this great business is to be arrested because the first cases to be brought before the judges of assize are appeals from the assistant-barristers on the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland. Why, sir, we know very well what will happen. Those appeals will demand from the judges of assize the concentration of their whole intellect. They will have to investigate the circumstances of a mode of life with which they are little acquainted, and which their acuteness alone will enable them to detach from the entanglements of local lawyers. They will have to go into accounts; and they will have, in the language of this bill, to do that which judges of assize will do with great care and the most solemn sense of responsibility—to enter on the ‘moral conduct’ of the parties, and see how far that ‘moral conduct’ affects the contract between landlord and tenant. And what will happen? Either their whole time will be taken up by this duty—or what is more likely, the duties will be performed in a most unsatisfactory and perfunctory manner. You know something of this now in Ireland. You have an appeal from the civil bill court to two judges of assize; and is that which takes place, when those appeals are made,

a satisfactory mode of administering British justice? No. Matters are hurried over, and questions are decided in a manner that gives little satisfaction; and every person present, except the suffering plaintiff or defendant, is delighted, because they are dying to hear the blazing eloquence of the great counsel who are ready to open causes with which these questions from the civil bill court interfere. Therefore I think, whether I look to your primary court or your court of appeal, the prospect is unsatisfactory.” Instead of the formation of those tribunals Mr. Disraeli suggested that judges should be specially sent down, as in England under the late Election Act, to perform the necessary duties; and this suggestion was all the more feasible since the Irish bench was not sufficiently employed either for the benefit of the state or for the happiness of the judges.

In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli strongly protested against all interference with freedom of contract, since he looked upon freedom of contract as “one of the greatest securities for the progress of civilization.” For a country to suspend its freedom of contract, the state must be in a most dangerous or diseased condition. “I cannot bring myself to believe,” he said, “that the condition of Ireland is such as to justify us in adopting what appears a permanent departure from one of the cardinal principles of a free and progressive state. I think we ought to hesitate before we adopt such a course. I feel the difficulties which the government have to encounter in dealing with this question. I am perfectly ready to consider it in any way in which we can possibly advance their general policy, without compromising what I must look upon as a sacred principle. I think the House ought to discard all pedantic scruples and all party feeling in dealing with existing circumstances; and I think we should be prepared, as far as existing circumstances are concerned, to support the general policy of the government, and not to hesitate even when we believe that

it touches upon and injures general principles which we may consider of vital importance in the government of the country. But although the exigencies of the state situation may demand and authorize such a course, that is perfectly different from our going out of our way permanently and completely, and announcing that Ireland is in such a condition that we cannot allow the two most considerable classes in the country—for the landlords and the tenants are after all the two most considerable classes in the country—to enjoy the first and most beneficial privilege of civilized life. . . . I know well that the condition of Ireland may act upon the decision of this House in the conduct of this bill. I, who am offering to this bill no factious opposition, who have given to it as I promised a candid consideration, and who I trust, with the modifications which argument and reason may bring about, will yet be able to give it a cordial support, am most anxious that hon. gentlemen, on whatever side they sit, will not decide upon the fate of Ireland, in the most interesting and important relations of its most important classes, in a spirit of panic. Do not let us vote upon this subject as if we had received threatening letters—as if we expected to meet Rory of the Hills when we go into the lobby. No. Let us decide upon all those great subjects which will be brought under our consideration in committee as becomes members of the House of Commons; for depend upon it, if we are induced in a hurry and with precipitation to agree to such monstrous enactments as that the Irish people should not have the power, for instance, of entering into contracts with each other, the time will come—a more tranquil and genial hour as regards Ireland than the present—when the reproach we shall receive upon the subject will be made from Ireland itself, and they will say of the English people, ‘They treated us in our hour of difficulty as men who

neither comprehended justice nor deserved freedom.’”

The second reading of the bill was carried by a large majority: ayes, 442; noes, 11. Among the minority the most conspicuous name was that of Mr. Henley.

We have no intention to discuss at length a measure which was supposed to effect a full and final settlement of the Irish land question, but which has instead rendered Ireland more discontented, more turbulent, and more aggressive in her demands than she was before Mr. Gladstone entered upon his policy of governing the island according to “Irish ideas.” The Irish Church bill gave a blow to religion in Ireland, from which the country has never recovered; the Irish land bill undermined the security of property, and hence agrarian outrages, ruined landlords, and the seditious state of things now prevailing across St. George’s Channel. That the scheme of Mr. Gladstone was not considered incapable of improvement, was evident from the fact that when the bill was carried into committee it was threatened with no less than 300 amendments. The first important debate took place in committee upon the third clause, which provided for compensation in absence of custom.

Mr. Disraeli moved (April 4, 1870) that the compensation for eviction should be limited by the insertion of the words, “in respect of unexhausted improvements made by him or any predecessor in title, and of interruption in the completion of any course of husbandry suited to the holding.” As ministers had come to the conclusion to remodel the clause, so as to separate compensation for improvements from compensation for eviction, the amendment of Mr. Disraeli struck at one of the main ideas of the bill. This meditated separation, said Mr. Disraeli, made the bill entirely different from the measure which he and his party had voted in debate. It introduced into the bill the principle that “the termination of an occupancy was a grievance for which the tenant ought to be

compensated," and that therefore occupation involved a right of property, in fact a right to a third of the freehold. Such a principle, argued Mr. Disraeli, would affect the security of all landlords throughout the United Kingdom, and yet bring no advantage to Ireland.

"The landlord would say," continued Mr. Disraeli with rare prescience, 'We must both stand upon our rights. This new-fangled law, which has given you a contingent remainder to the third of my freehold, has at least given me this security, that if you do not pay me your rent I may get rid of you.' We have heard a great deal of evictions under different forms and circumstances; but this bill provides what I should describe as a species of natural eviction. When a tenant does not pay his rent, the landlord may get rid of him without his claiming a third of his freehold as compensation. Every one must feel that, if only in self-defence, the landlord will avail himself of that position, the only position of strength left him. He will wait till the tenant does not pay his rent—and, as far as I have heard, the class of tenants for whom we are legislating in this exceptional way have the habit of falling into arrear with their rent; the landlord will avail himself of the power which is placed in his hands, and then what will occur? You will have farms consolidated, and the very farmers for whom you are taking this perilous step will be swept from the surface of the soil. Either the landlord will entirely assert his authority, or the tenant, finding himself in this position, will revert to those rural ethics with the consequences of which we are all familiar. *There will be a new grievance, the payment of rent; and the non-payment of rent will become a principle asserted by the same rural logic,* the startling consequences of which have filled the mind of the country with apprehension and horror almost every day. The argument of the Irish tenant—belonging to the very class that you think you are now setting up by this violation of the funda-

mental law of the country—will be to this effect, 'I have lost my holding because I did not pay my rent; can anything be more flagrantly unjust than that a man should be deprived of his contingent right to a third of the freehold because he does not pay his rent?' That is a natural view which may lead to a much more successful agitation than any we have yet heard of. The question is unanswerable; we may think it is abstractedly unreasonable, but it is the necessary result of our legislation. And what will be the consequence? *Why, that payment of rent will become a grievance, and you will find yourselves in exactly the same position in which you are now placed. There will be great complaints of vexatious and tyrannical evictions, and on the other side, the most violent means by which the supposed rights of the occupiers to property in the soil may be vindicated will be resorted to.* And so far from the improvement of the country terminating all these misunderstandings and heartburnings, which we seem now so anxious upon both sides of the House to bring to a close, you will have the same controversies still raging, *only with increased acerbity, and under circumstances and conditions which inevitably must lead to increased bitterness and increased perils to society.*" The appeal of Mr. Disraeli for the government to return to their original scheme was, however, in vain. The amendment was rejected by a large majority—ayes, 220; noes, 296.

On the following night the government carried an amendment establishing the right of an evicted tenant to compensation, "for the loss which the court shall find to have been sustained by him in quitting his holding." Some sharp discussion ensued as to the questions of tenant right, free contract, improvements, and advances to tenants; but eventually the bill was read a third time and issued from the House of Commons without bearing upon its face many substantial alterations. In the Upper House the peers, after much discussion,

contented themselves with prescribing only two amendments of importance to the consideration of the popular chamber—the reduction carried by the Duke of Richmond in the general scale of compensation, and the reduction from thirty-one to twenty-one years of the duration of lease excepting landlords from the operations of the bill. These amendments the government requested the peers to reconsider, and after further discussion, which ended in the adoption of modifications of no serious character, the Irish land bill was finally enrolled on the statute-book.

Side by side with this measure was another scheme of the government, which was attracting far more attention than their settlement of the land question in Ireland, and which created no little excitement in the Nonconformist world. The ignorance which had been permitted to prevail among the lower orders had long been considered a disgrace to the country, and Mr. Disraeli when in power had given his attention to the subject, and had been most desirous to introduce an educational scheme so as to remove a national scandal which had too long been allowed to exist.* It was therefore with no little chagrin that he saw the measure which he had so long been advocating fall to the hands of his rivals, and the Liberals about to reap what the

* "With regard to the question of education, ever since I have been in public life I have done everything I possibly could to promote the cause of the education of the people generally. I have done so because I have always felt that with the limited population of this United Kingdom, compared with the great imperial position which it occupies with reference to other nations, it is not only our duty, but it is an absolute necessity, that we should study to make every man the most effective being that education can possibly constitute him. In the old wars there used to be a story that one Englishman could beat three members of some other nation; but I think if we want to maintain our power we ought to make one Englishman equal really in the business of life to three other men that any other nation can furnish. I do not see how otherwise, with our limited population, we can fulfil the great destiny that I believe awaits us, and the great position we occupy. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, whether it be a far greater advanced system of primary education—whether it be that system of competitive examination which I have ever supported, though I am not unconscious of some pedantry with which it is accompanied—or whatever may be the circumstances, I shall ever be its supporter."—*Speech at Edinburgh, October 29, 1867.*

Conservatives had sown. Alone of all European countries, England had tolerated a system which allowed more than two-thirds of her juvenile population to grow up without receiving elementary education. In every village and in every town were to be met men and women who could not read a line in a book or write their own names, and who at the earliest moment their strength permitted had been sent to labour in the fields and the workshop, or despatched to service or the factories, as utterly destitute of any educational advantages as if they had been the offspring of the most benighted savages. A few schools of the Church of England and a few schools of the Nonconformists had struggled to dispel the prevailing darkness; but it had been asked often and often, both by philanthropist and statesman, of what use were such private, and frequently struggling institutions, to the multitude who could not avail themselves of their advantages? As well feed a regiment with a few loaves.

Shortly after the land bill had been introduced, it fell to the lot of Mr. Forster, to whose department the question belonged, to explain the provisions of the Elementary Education Act the government intended to bring forward. The scheme was not a complicated one. Efficient school provision was to be secured by enactment in every district in England where it was wanted. The districts were to be the civil parishes; and once England was divided into districts, steps would be taken to ascertain the educational provision and their wants. If in any district the educational facilities afforded a due amount of primary secular instruction, such district would not be disturbed so long as it continued to be supplied with educational facilities. Schools entitled to government aid would have to be efficient, according to the standard which parliament from time to time might set up. Inspection would no longer be voluntary, and every school would require to submit to an inspection without any denominational conditions. A conscience clause was also to

be attached to every school as the condition of any grant; and such clause would apply to every kind of school, whether Church of England or of any other persuasion. With regard to what was perhaps the most important feature in the bill, compulsory provision of schools, it was considered that no central authority could undertake to supply schools all over England; and as voluntary local efforts had failed, the want was to be supplied by local taxation under local management, to be supplemented by a government grant, but with central supervision and inspection. For such purpose there would be a power to unite parishes together, since the requirements of the town and country districts were so different that it became necessary to have some power of the kind. It was, however, not contemplated to make the area of the school unions the same as that of the poor-law unions. The local boards of management were to be elected in towns by the town council, and in the country by the select vestries; if there was no select vestry then by the vestry. School fees would not be given up, but there would be a power in exceedingly poor and destitute districts to set up free schools, subject to the approval of the central boards, and also to give free tickets, but with due care that they attach no social stigma. The question of local rates was a very delicate matter: the rate would not be a special one, but would be levied with the poor rate; and there would be a power in the bill, wherever the charge exceeded threepence in the pound, that it should be supplemented by a grant. The local boards would have a discretion either to establish fresh schools, or to assist the existing schools; but if they assisted one they would have to assist all, and not to select any one for the bestowal of their favours. With respect to religious instruction, the discretion of the local boards would not be interfered with. To effect compulsory attendance, power would be given to school-boards to frame by-laws to compel attendance between the hours of twelve

and five, unless reasonable cause could be alleged. Those by-laws would be approved by central authority, and laid before parliament. The question of the number of attendances would be left as a matter of detail for the local board to decide. "The system," concluded Mr. Forster, "may be described as the education of the people's children, by the people's executive, under the control and supervision of the people's representatives."

The measure was at first favourably received, but on a closer examination of the bill the conflict of opinion became severe. Two societies were formed representing the antagonistic views upon the subject. The Educational League proposed to provide for the local support of schools from the rates alone: on the other hand, the Educational Union insisted that the schools should be supplemented by subscriptions and by the pence of the children. The League was in favour of enforcing attendance at school by direct compulsion, the Union by indirect compulsion: the League opposed all religious teaching in rate-supported schools, whilst the Union recommended a general conscience clause. The Nonconformists, as a body, voted for secular education, whilst many of the Liberals and all of the Conservatives objected to a system of education from which religion was excluded. The religious question was the one great difficulty with which the government had to grapple. The Nonconformists declined to enter into any compromise whatever upon the subject; no aid from the state, they declared, ought to be granted to any schools but those which were conducted on strictly secular and undenominational principles. The government, however, did not see their way to adopt a system of secular education pure and simple: they proposed that all schools existing under the charge of religious communities (the schools of the Church of England, the schools of the Church of Rome, &c.) which became affiliated to the educational scheme of the government, and obtained government aid, should accept a

conscience clause, by means of which the religious convictions of parents and children should be scrupulously attended to in the instruction given during the regular school hours. To this proposal the Nonconformists objected, and since the government would not accede to their demands much of the dissenting interest eventually became alienated from the Gladstone administration.

Mr. Disraeli did not speak upon the subject until the bill was considered in committee. He addressed the House on the occasion of Mr. Gladstone expressing the readiness of the government to adopt the amendment of Mr. Cowper-Temple, to exclude from all rate-built schools every catechism and formulary distinctive of denominational creed, and to sever altogether the relation between the local school-boards and the denominational schools, leaving the latter to look solely to the central grants for help. Mr. Disraeli said (June 16, 1870) that as the country had decided that national education was to be a religious education he failed to see how, if the amendment of Mr. Cowper-Temple were accepted, the country could have a religious education. He had been prepared to support the bill as introduced by Mr. Forster, but the measure then before the House was a new bill. It was easy to say that no catechism or formularies should be used in those schools distinctive of any particular denomination, but what did such refusal signify? "As far as I can ascertain," he said, "the new scheme would be this—that although no creed nor catechism of any denomination is to be introduced, yet the schoolmaster would have the power and opportunity of teaching, enforcing, and explaining the Holy Scripture when he reads. Now, he cannot do that without drawing some inferences and some conclusions, and what will those inferences and conclusions be but dogmas? They may not be the opinions of the rector, nor of the Presbyterian minister, nor of the Nonconformist minister, but they are the opinions of the schoolmaster. You

are contemplating the establishment of a class who must be endowed with great abilities, and who certainly will have to perform most important functions and to exercise great powers, and I want to know in the present state of affairs where these schoolmasters are to be found? You will not intrust the priest or the presbyter with the privilege of expounding the Holy Scriptures to the scholars; *but for that purpose you are inventing and establishing a new sacerdotal class.* The schoolmaster who will exercise these functions, and who will occupy this position, will be a member of a class which will in the future exercise an extraordinary influence upon the history of England and upon the conduct of Englishmen."

The adoption of this amendment led to much discussion. It was asked, what was a formulary? Was the Nicene Creed a formulary? Was the Apostles' Creed a formulary? Was the Lord's Prayer a formulary? The amendment was branded as a trap for morbid and scrupulous consciences, and would only be favourable to those who desired to create discord. Still, in spite of the various objections brought forward against the measure, the Education Bill, like its companion the Irish Land Bill, became law with very few alterations made in its clauses. The compromise adopted by the government had been maintained, and the denominational system was continued, but not extended. Religious inspection was withdrawn, though religious instruction was permitted under certain conditions. The measure when put into operation has worked well; and thanks to its clauses, the next generation will not find themselves deprived of those elementary educational advantages which every nation in Europe had granted for years to their children, but which England alone, until the bill of 1870 was included in the statute-book, had denied.

New brooms, we are told, sweep clean; and the political besom wielded by Mr. Gladstone was certainly active, even if

it was not employed with much benefit. Most statesmen, on acceding to power, would have been satisfied with attempting to carry out an Irish policy during the first months of their tenure of office. But Mr. Gladstone had resolved not only to effect reform, but to effect his reforms all at once. He had severed the church from the state in Ireland, and at the same time he had introduced his Irish Land Bill. Carrying out the policy of the Conservative party, he had added an Education Act to the statute-book. Yet these reforms failed to content his restless and varied activity; and with an Irish Church Bill, an Irish Land Bill, and an Elementary Education Act on his hands, he must needs occupy himself with the abolition of purchase in the army, and with a Ballot Act. With the details of several of these measures Mr. Disraeli did not trouble himself. He intrusted the work of criticism to his colleagues, and he had no reason to regret the confidence he reposed in his able lieutenants.

Mr. Disraeli possessed one of the greatest gifts necessary for the leadership of an Opposition—he knew when and how to wait. He saw Mr. Gladstone in command of an immense majority, and that for the moment it was impossible that the Conservatives could effect a successful resistance against the strong tide of a general reform which was then in full flow. But he also saw that the Liberal party was far from united, that the prime minister was a man more calculated to alienate his followers than to command their adhesion, and that the administration was composed of such discordant elements as to cause feuds and jealousies inevitably to break out and perform the work of the Opposition. There was no hurry, and it was idle to force the hand of time. It was true that Mr. Gladstone was the popular man of the hour, that reform was acceptable, and that the Liberal party was in command of the political situation; yet Mr. Disraeli well knew that the day would most assuredly arrive

when the nation would chafe under the rule of Mr. Gladstone, when reform would be looked upon as synonymous with an irritating interference, and when the Liberals, discontented and disorganized, would fall an easy prey to a judicious and well-planned assault of the foe. He could afford to wait. Time would fight on the side of the Conservative party, and no other ally was then necessary. Accordingly Mr. Disraeli stayed at home, or corrected his proof-sheets, or went out to dinner, as the humour suited him; he entered upon a brief period of well-earned repose.

The strained relations which had during the last few years existed between France and Prussia now broke out into an open and terrible war. The expedition to Mexico had turned out a failure, and it was necessary, if the Emperor Napoleon wished to divert the hostile criticism of Paris from his dynasty, to fully occupy the mind of the French with serious and absorbing topics. When two nations cordially hate each other, there is never any very great difficulty in finding some cause which will create a quarrel. France was resolved to make war upon the detested Prussians, all the more detested since the overthrow of Austria; and she soon discovered an excuse to force the hand of her foe. The crown of Spain had been going a begging, and at last the Spanish cabinet had resolved upon proposing Leopold, hereditary prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen as a candidate for the throne. The feeling in France was antagonistic to seeing “the sceptre of Charles the Fifth confided to a Prussian prince,” and the French cabinet avowed their intention of using all their strength to prevent the election of Leopold, and requested the co-operation of England in warding off an act which would endanger the peace of Europe. This favour was complied with, and Lord Granville at once penned a despatch to Berlin directing Lord A. Loftus, the English minister there, to appeal to the “wise and disinterested magnanimity” of the King of

Prussia not to support the candidature of Prince Leopold; whilst at the same time our ambassador at Madrid was urged to use every pressure with the Spanish government so as to "induce them to abandon the project of conferring the throne of Spain on Prince Leopold."

The condition of affairs between the two countries became daily more critical. No answer had as yet been returned by Prussia to the demands of the French government; the King of Prussia was at Ems taking the waters, and thither M. Benedetti was despatched to obtain a prompt reply to the conditions which France had brought forward. The tone of Prussia was firm and dignified. The offer of the crown of Spain to Prince Leopold was not, she said, an affair which concerned the Prussian government. The North German government had no desire for a war of succession, but if France wished to proceed to hostilities on account of the choice of a king of Spain, such a proceeding on her part would be an evidence of a disposition to quarrel without any lawful cause. Still, if France chose to go to war, North Germany was prepared to defend herself. In an interview with M. Benedetti the King of Prussia admitted that he had consented to the Prince of Hohenzollern's accepting the crown of Spain, and that having given his consent it would be difficult for him to recall it.

And now an event occurred which it was hoped would solve the difficulty. Prince Antoine of Hohenzollern informed the Spanish ambassador at Paris that he had withdrawn the candidature of his son Prince Leopold, as he was determined not to allow a secondary family question to grow into a pretext for war. But France had resolved upon entering into hostilities, and declined to be satisfied. The renunciation of the Spanish crown by Prince Leopold had put an end to the original cause of the dispute, yet France refused to regard the affair as finished without obtaining a more complete satisfaction from Prussia. The King of Prussia was to pledge him-

self that never on any future occasion would he allow of any similar candidature. "*Nous demandons*," said the Duc de Grammont, "*au Roi de Prusse de défendre au prince de Hohenzollern de revenir sur sa résolution. S'il le fait tout l'incident est terminé.*" Such a demand could not be justified, and war ensued.

"The guarantees demanded from Prussia," said M. Rouher, addressing the Emperor Napoleon on the occasion of the reception of the senate at St. Cloud, "have been refused, and the dignity of France has been disregarded. Your Majesty draws the sword, and the country is with you, trembling with indignation at the excesses that an ambition over-excited by one day's good fortune was sure, sooner or later, to produce. Your Majesty was able to wait, but has occupied the last four years in perfecting the armament and the organization of the army." The emperor thus replied:—"I was gratified to learn with what great enthusiasm the senate received the declaration which the minister of foreign affairs has been instructed to make. Whenever great interests and the honour of France are at stake, I am sure to receive energetic support from the senate. We are beginning a serious struggle, and France needs the co-operation of all her children. I am very glad that the first patriotic utterance has come from the senate. It will be loudly re-echoed throughout the country."

The German view of the case was different. An address had been issued by the town council of Berlin to King William of Prussia. It thanked the king for having repelled the unheard-of attempt made by France upon the dignity and independence of Prussia; and since war had been declared by foreign arrogance, every German in the fatherland would do his duty. In reply the king said, "God knows I am not answerable for this war. The demand sent me I could not do otherwise than reject. My reply gained the approval of all the towns and provinces, the expression of which I have received from all parts of Germany,

and even from Germans residing beyond the seas. The greeting which was given me here on Friday last animated me with pride and confidence. Heavy sacrifices will be demanded of my people. We have been rendered unaccustomed to them by the quickly-gained victories which we achieved in the last two wars. We shall not get off so cheaply this time; but I know what I may expect from my army and from those now hastening to join the ranks. The instrument is sharp and cutting. The result is in the hands of God."

Such was the origin of the war which resulted in the overthrow of the Bonaparte dynasty, and in the elevation of Germany as the dominant power of Europe. France had indeed to pay a bitter penalty for her high-handed and outrageous act of aggression. Until defeat after defeat had softened the sympathies of mankind, and until the greed of Germany, stimulated by conquest, had shown itself almost insatiable, the public voice of Europe loudly condemned the conduct of France, and warmly approved of the resistance of Prussia. "The ruler of any country," said Mr. Disraeli in the few observations he made on this occasion concerning the rival powers (July 15, 1870), "who at this time disturbs the peace of Europe incurs the gravest political and moral responsibility that can ever fall to the lot of man. I hear superficial remarks made about military surprises, the capture of capitals, and the brilliancy and celerity with which certain results may be brought about. These are events of a bygone age. In the last century such melodramatic catastrophes were frequent and effective; we live in an age animated by a very different spirit. The fate of a great country like France or Prussia cannot be ultimately affected by such incidents; and the sovereign who trusts to them will find at the moment of action that he has to encounter, wherever he may be placed, a more powerful force than any military array, and that is the outraged opinion of an enlightened world."

Before the prorogation of parliament Mr. Disraeli thought it his duty to ascertain clearly what was the position of England with regard to the belligerents, and to the obligations she had entered into (August 1, 1870). The treaties guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as the treaty of Vienna, should, he declared, be maintained.* He wished the country to be prepared, and not to be taken aback as she had been at the time of the Crimean war. The policy of England should be not only neutrality, but "armed neutrality," ready for any emergency that might arise. "Were our armaments," he asked, "in a condition to enable us to adopt this policy?" In what condition was our navy? In what condition was our army? In what condition were our volunteers? Those questions were all the more necessary to put since the government had

* A considerable sensation was at this time being created by the publication in the *Times* of a *projet de traité* some months since offered to Prussia by France, and again submitted during the late negotiations. "Deeming it useful to draw closer the bonds of friendship which unite them," it was provided by Article 1 that France should recognize Prussian acquisitions in the German war; 2, that Prussia should facilitate the acquisition of Luxembourg by France; 3, France would not oppose a Federal Union of North and South Germany; and 4, "On his part, His Majesty the King of Prussia, in case His Majesty the Emperor of the French should be obliged by circumstances to cause his troops to enter Belgium or to conquer her, will accord the succour of his arms to France, and will sustain her with all his forces of land and sea against every power which, in that eventuality, shall declare war upon her." The 5th and last article provided for "an alliance offensive and defensive, which they solemnly engage to maintain." M. de Lavalette assured Lord Granville that the plan contained in the *projet de traité* was one which "had originated with M. de Bismarck, and had been the subject of some conversation with M. Benedetti; but it never had any serious basis, and was rejected by both parties." Count Bismarck, on the other hand, wrote: "The document published by the *Times* contains one of the proposals which have been made to us since the Danish war by official and unofficial French agents, with the object of establishing an alliance between Prussia and France for their mutual aggrandizement. I will send the text of an offer made in 1866, according to which France proposed to aid Prussia with 300,000 men against Austria, and to permit Prussia's aggrandizement by six or eight millions of subjects in return for the cession to France of the district between the Rhine and the Moselle. The impossibility of agreeing to this course was clear to all except French diplomatists. On this proposition being rejected, the French government began to calculate upon our defeat. France has not ceased to tempt us with offers to be carried out at the cost of Germany and Belgium. In the interests of peace I kept them secret. After the Luxembourg affair the proposals dealing with Belgium and South Germany were renewed." The Duc de Grammont publicly defied Count Bismarck to name one fact in support of his insinuations.

adopted a policy of retrenchment. The country must not be taken by surprise. There must be no repetition of the humiliating scenes which led to the Crimean war. "Let us," he said, "profit by that experience. Let the government of the country feel that the House of Commons, without respect to person or party, is prepared to give them a hearty support. Let them speak to foreign powers with that clearness and firmness which can only arise from a due conception of their duties and a determination to fulfil them. If that course is taken by the government I more than hope, I believe, that this country will not be involved in war. I believe more than that—I believe that the influence of England, especially if combined with the influence of the other great neutral powers, may speedily secure the restoration of peace."

In reply Mr. Gladstone described our position to be one of strict neutrality—not an "armed neutrality," but a secure neutrality, backed and sustained by adequate measures of defence. "Happily," he said, "we have peace establishments which are not only in the highest efficiency, but capable of easy and rapid expansion, and the reductions which have been made have promoted instead of diminishing our strength. We have now an army of 89,000 and a reserve of 41,000, as compared with 87,500 regulars and 19,000 reserve in 1868; and a strong concentrated system of naval defence in every way superior to the old sporadic system." Before the session closed the safety of Belgium had been assured. A new and triple treaty had been signed by England, Prussia, and France, with the object of maintaining intact the independence and neutrality of Belgium, as provided in the quintuple treaty of 1839. In the event of either belligerent violating that neutrality, England was to co-operate with the other in such a manner as might be mutually agreed upon to insure its observance.

If the duties of leader of the Opposition sat somewhat lightly upon Mr. Disraeli

during this session, he at least had not been idle. After an absence of a quarter of a century, he returned to the arena in which he had gained his first triumphs. Early in the May of this year appeared his novel "Lothair." The discussion as to the disestablishment of the Irish Church had turned the attention of Mr. Disraeli to religious topics. He saw the country fighting against three powerful influences, each struggling for the mastery, and each with its ranks crowded with followers—Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, and the various forms of free-thought. He resolved to write a book in which those three creeds should be portrayed, and the nature of their teaching discussed. He selected a young and wealthy but somewhat undecided peer as his hero, who successively lost his heart to three heroines, who stood as types of the three different forms of faith. Corisande represented Anglicanism, Miss Arundel the creed of Rome, and Theodora free-thought. In the end Lothair married Corisande, and thus Anglicanism gained the victory. When a man who has ruled cabinets writes a book he is sure of readers; and to describe the success which "Lothair" achieved we must go back to the days when "Waverley" first made its appearance, when the "Pickwick Papers" made the name of Charles Dickens famous, and when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" first made us realize the horrors of slavery. The book was subscribed for by every library in the kingdom; it was read everywhere; it was reviewed everywhere; it was translated into every language in Europe. Seldom had publishers brought out such a financial success; seldom had an author been more talked about. Yet as a literary effort "Lothair" cannot be said to have added to the reputation of the man who wrote "Coningsby"—the best political novel in our language. As in all Mr. Disraeli's works of fiction, the book abounds in witty and amusing dialogue, in charming descriptions of scenery which remind us of Octave Feuillet, and in clever delineation of character; but it must be confessed that

Lothair himself fails to excite our sympathy, that the story often flags and becomes dull, and that the style is in many places tawdry and slipshod in the extreme. It is no injustice to the author to assert, that had the novel been written by an unknown man, it would scarcely have attracted ordinary attention.

The introduction to the book is, however, of much interest, since it throws a light upon the political teaching of Mr. Disraeli. We there read what was the object with which "Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred" were given to the world. The origin and character of political parties in England, their influence on the condition of the people of the country, some picture of the moral and physical condition of that people, and some intimation of the means by which it might be elevated and improved — those were themes which Mr. Disraeli said had long engaged his attention, and those he discussed in his three celebrated romances. "Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred," he said, constituted a real trilogy.

"Born in a library," he wrote,* "and trained from early childhood by learned men who did not share the passions and the prejudices of our political and social life, I had imbibed on some subjects conclusions different from those which generally prevail, and especially with reference to the history of our own country. How an oligarchy had been substituted for a kingdom, and a narrow-minded and bigoted fanaticism flourished in the name of religious liberty, were problems long to me insoluble, but which early interested me. But what most attracted my musing, even as a boy, was the elements of our political parties, and the strange mystification by which that which was national in its constitution had become odious, and that which was exclusive was presented as popular.

"What has mainly led to this confusion of public thought and this uneasiness of society is our habitual carelessness in not

distinguishing between the excellence of a principle and its injurious or obsolete application. The feudal system may have worn out, but its main principle, that the tenure of property should be the fulfilment of duty, is the essence of good government. The divine right of kings may have been a plea for feeble tyrants; but the divine right of government is the keystone of human progress, and without it governments sink into police, and a nation is degraded into a mob.

"National institutions were the ramparts of the multitude against large estates exercising political power derived from a limited class. The church was in theory, and once it had been in practice, the spiritual and intellectual trainer of the people. The privileges of the multitude and the prerogatives of the sovereign had grown up together, and together they had waned. Under the plea of liberalism, all the institutions which were the bulwarks of the multitude had been sapped and weakened, and nothing had been substituted for them. The people were without education; and relatively to the advance of science and the comfort of the superior classes, their condition had deteriorated, and their physical quality as a race was threatened. Those who in theory were the national party, and who sheltered themselves under the institutions of the country against the oligarchy, had, both by a misconception and a neglect of their duties, become, and justly become, odious; while the oligarchy, who had mainly founded themselves on the plunder of the popular estate, either in the shape of the possessions of the church or the domains of the crown, had by the patronage of certain general principles which they only meagerly applied, assumed, and to a certain degree acquired, the character of a popular party. But no party was national: one was exclusive and odious, and the other liberal and cosmopolitan.

"The perverse deviation of political parties from their original significance may at first sight seem only a subject of historical

* Reprinted from the Introduction to "Lothair" by the permission of Messrs. Longmans.

curiosity, but they assume a different character when they practically result in the degradation of a people.

"To change back the oligarchy into a generous aristocracy round a real throne; to infuse life and vigour into the church, as the trainer of the nation, by the revival of Convocation, then dumb, on a wide basis, and not, as has been since done, in the shape of a priestly section; to establish a commercial code on the principles successfully negotiated by Lord Bolingbroke at Utrecht, and which, though baffled at the time by a Whig parliament, were subsequently and triumphantly vindicated by his political pupil and heir, Mr. Pitt; to govern Ireland according to the policy of Charles I. and not of Oliver Cromwell; to emancipate the political constituency of 1832 from its sectarian bondage and contracted sympathies; to elevate the physical as well as the moral condition of the people, by establishing that labour required regulation as much as property; and all this rather by the use of ancient forms and the restoration of the past than by political revolutions founded on abstract ideas, appeared to be the course which the circumstances of this country required, and which, practically speaking, could only, with all their faults and backslidings, be undertaken and accomplished by a reconstructed Tory party."

This was the aim which Mr. Disraeli set before him; and to make the public familiar with his teaching he embodied his views in the form of fiction. In "Coningsby" the derivation and character of political parties were discussed; in "Sybil" was portrayed the condition of the people; and in "Tancred" the duties of the church were laid down. "It will be seen," writes Mr. Disraeli, "that the general spirit of these productions ran counter to the views which had been long prevalent in England, and which may be popularly, though not altogether accurately, described as utilitarian. They recognized imagination in the government of nations as a quality not less important than reason. They trusted much to a popular sentiment, which rested on an heroic tradition and was sustained by the high spirit of a free aristocracy. Their economic principles were not unsound, but they looked upon the health and knowledge of the multitude as not the least precious part of the wealth of nations. In asserting the doctrine of race, they were entirely opposed to the equality of man, and similar abstract dogmas which have destroyed ancient society without creating a satisfactory substitute. Resting on popular sympathies and popular privileges, they held that no society could be durable unless it was built upon the principles of loyalty and religious reverence."

CHAPTER VII.

LIBERAL LABOURS.

THE comparative repose which Mr. Disraeli had enjoyed during the last session was not to be of long duration. Important events were occurring which required careful investigation on the part of a leader of the Opposition, for already the Liberal government were beginning their work of national degradation and interference with domestic interests which was, three years later, to lead to their overthrow amid the well-merited contempt, not only of their own countrymen, but of the foreign powers. Politics, diplomacy, and cruel war were busy re-arranging the map of Europe. The biter had been terribly bitten; and the hordes of Germany, not content with Sedan and the downfall of the Bonapartist dynasty, were surrounding Paris, refusing to quit French soil until their stern demands had been fulfilled to the letter. The King of Italy, finding the moment opportune, marched his troops into Rome and proclaimed the city, in spite of the pope and the whole college of cardinals, as the future capital of his dominions. "With Rome for our capital," cried Victor Emmanuel, "I have fulfilled my promise, and crowned the enterprise which was begun twenty-three years ago by my magnanimous father. Italy is free and united henceforth, and depends upon herself alone making her great and happy. We entered Rome by our national right, and shall remain there, keeping the promises solemnly made to ourselves of freedom to the church and the independence of the Holy See in its spiritual ministry and its relations with Catholicity." America was again agitating, in a somewhat aggressive tone, for the settlement of that long-vexed question the *Alabama* claims,

and of the other grievances of which she complained. But the topic which especially interested England at this time, and aroused all her indignation, was the calm and insolent repudiation by Russia of the clause in the treaty of Paris relating to the neutralization of the Black Sea.

Ever since the conclusion of the Crimean war, that clause had been rankling in the mind of Russia very much as the possession of Alsace and Lorraine by Germany rankles now in the mind of France. As long as that article in the treaty of Paris was binding and complied with, so long was Russia, in the eyes of the patriotic Muscovite, humiliated where she was the most sensitive, and prevented from being the mistress of her actions. The Black Sea is virtually a Russian lake; and it was the just opinion of the powers which drew up the articles of peace at Paris, that unless some control was exercised over the movements of Russia in those waters, she would ever continue to be a source of anxiety to Turkey and of menace to Europe. Accordingly it was stipulated in a clear and special article, that the power of the Muscovite in the Euxine should be limited. It was agreed upon that the Black Sea should be neutralized; that its waters should be open to the merchant marine of all nations, but not to any ships of war; that there should be no military arsenals on its banks; and that Russia and Turkey should mutually engage to maintain in the Black Sea only a specified number of light vessels for the service of the coasts. Such importance did Lord Palmerston place upon these stipulations that he declared, that unless they were complied with peace was out of the question. Russia agreed to

the terms imposed upon her; and it was then definitely laid down in the treaty of Paris that "the Black Sea is neutralized; its waters and its ports, thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war either of the powers possessing its coasts or of any other power."

Good faith or the ordinary sentiments of honour have never been very conspicuous in the proceedings of Muscovite diplomacy; and Russia had secretly resolved, when pledging herself to the clauses of the treaty of Paris, to repudiate those which galled her at the first fitting opportunity. That moment had now arrived. Prussia and France were too absorbed in cutting each other's throats to abandon such delightful work for the consideration of a treaty framed fourteen years ago, and which merely crippled the activity of Russia in the Euxine. If the Euxine had been the Rhine, and Turkey a German principality, then the question would have had a real and practical interest; but with Paris besieged, and peace only to be purchased at a most cruel price, what cared France for Russia and her fleet? she had enough to do to think of her own humiliation. Since her late defeat and degradation Austria was of little account in the family of nations. There was therefore only England; and since the accession of the Liberal government to power, the impression in every city on the Continent was that nothing would induce England to go to war. She might be defied and insulted with impunity, it was sneered, as she was then too immersed in extending her commerce, in stimulating Irish agitation to pave the way for legislative reforms, in revising the "harum-scarum" budgets of her wondrous chancellor of the exchequer, in introducing a cheese-paring economy, and in impairing efficiency which she called retrenchment, to dream of hostilities or to object to the gauntlet even when flung in her face. She would pen despatches, she would make

endless appeals to the principles of a high morality, she would agree to an arbitration—but fight most certainly she would not. Her own aim, no matter under what provocation, was to amass bullion, not to shed blood; she was willing to sink her prestige, provided her commerce only developed. So thought Russia, and events proved that she had judged aright.

A few weeks before the meeting of parliament Prince Gortschakoff had informed the English government that Russia declined any longer to be bound by the hateful clause in the treaty of Paris. The articles in the treaty, he said, had not been strictly kept by the other powers, and Russia saw no reason why she should not follow suit in the work of repudiation. "Our august master," wrote the prince to the Russian ambassador at the court of St. James's, "cannot admit that treaties violated in their essential and general clauses should continue to be binding in those clauses which affect the direct interests of his empire. His Imperial Majesty cannot admit, in fact, that the security of Russia should rest upon a fiction which has not withstood the ordeal of time, and that it should be endangered in consequence of his respect towards engagements which have not been performed in all their integrity. Relying on the sense of equity of the powers signatories of the treaty of 1856, and the consciousness these have of their own dignity, the emperor bids you declare that His Imperial Majesty can no longer consider himself bound to the terms of the treaty of March 18, 1856, in so far as these limit his rights of sovereignty in the Black Sea. That His Imperial Majesty considers it his right and his duty to give notice to His Majesty the Sultan of his withdrawal from the special and additional convention annexed to that treaty, which fixes the number and the size of the men-of-war which the two powers bordering on the Black Sea reserve to keep in the said sea. That he conveys loyal information of this to the powers and guarantors signatories of the general treaty,

of which the special convention constitutes an integral part. That in this respect he replaces the Sultan in full possession of all his rights in the same manner as he reclaims his own. In the discharge of this duty you will be careful to state, that our august master has no other object in all this besides the security and dignity of his empire. It is by no means the intention of His Imperial Majesty to revive the Eastern question. On this, as on all other points, he harbours no other wish than the maintenance and consolidation of peace. He entirely adheres otherwise to the general principles of the treaty of 1856, which have established the position of Turkey in the European concert. He is prepared to come to an understanding with the powers who signed the treaty, either with a view to confirm its general stipulations, to renew them, or to substitute for them any other arrangement which may seem equitable and calculated to insure the peace of the East and the European balance of power. His Majesty is convinced that this peace and this balance of power will receive an additional guarantee by being laid on more just and solid bases than those arising from a position which no great power could accept as a normal condition of existence."

A lengthy diplomatic correspondence ensued, conducted on the part of Lord Granville with the most perfect taste and temper, but which failed to move "our august master" from his purpose. Had Lord Granville been inspired by Lord Palmerston instead of by Mr. Gladstone, and had he been empowered to state that unless Russia withdrew her isolated and impertinent demands, our troops would again land upon her shores and our fleet once more anchor in her waters, a very different solution of the question might have been anticipated; for, like all bullies, Russia has ever been the first to submit to firm and decided measures when arrayed against her. Such a course was, however, not to be adopted. When a nation declines to support her opposition by an appeal to

arms, a conference generally comes to the rescue. An assembly of the representatives of the powers interested in the treaty of Paris assembled in London, "to discuss the questions which are raised in connection with the communications in the circular of the Imperial Russian cabinet." There was no discussion. The whole thing was a farce, for it was known before the conference had assembled that England had agreed to the wishes of "our august master." Still such a meeting was considered to tone down the slight put upon a country that had once been governed by a Chatham, a Pitt, and a Palmerston. Repudiation is of course repudiation, whether it be by a circular or by a conference; but in the one case it is brutal and direct, in the other it is more finished and in order. It is the difference between a pecuniary obligation being offensively ignored by the personal action of the debtor, and the claim being politely set aside by his trustees.

It was under such circumstances that the Houses met, February 9, 1871. The speech from the throne was evidently the work of the prime minister, for it was the longest and wordiest that the annals of parliament have ever had to record. Mention was made of the war between France and Germany, and of the rights and duties of neutrality which England had strictly discharged. Congratulations had been offered to the King of Prussia on his acceptance of the title of Emperor of Germany. A joint-commission had been appointed to settle the disputes between the United States and the territories of British North America, and also to consider the *Alabama* claims. The establishment of a prince of the house of Savoy on the Spanish throne was approved of, as was "a marriage between my daughter Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne." Allusion was then made to the diplomatic burlesque being acted in London, "I have endeavoured in correspondence with other powers of Europe to uphold the sanctity of treaties, and to remove any misapprehension as to the binding character

of their obligations. It was agreed by the powers, which had been parties to the treaty of 1856, that a conference should meet in London. This conference has now been for some time engaged in its labours; and I confidently trust that the result of its deliberations will be to uphold both the principles of public right and the general policy of the treaty, and at the same time, by a revision of some of its conditions in a fair and conciliatory spirit, to exhibit a cordial co-operation among the powers with regard to the Levant;" in other words, to abandon all clauses vital to our interests, but to strenuously uphold such as were not disputed. The verbose and exhausting document then concluded with the measures that were to be brought forward. It was evidently to be a busy session. There were to be introduced bills as to the abolition of religious tests in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as to ecclesiastical titles, the disabilities of trade combinations, the constitution of courts of justice and appeal, the adjustment of local burdens, and the licensing of houses for the sale of intoxicating liquors. We shall see how these prolific promises were fulfilled.

In the debate on the address, Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. They had re-assembled, he began, to encounter a state of affairs that all must admit to be greatly complicated, and not devoid of danger. At the outbreak of the hostilities between France and Germany, he had recommended that the government should adopt the policy of armed neutrality. The operation of an armed neutrality was threefold. Its first tendency was, of course, to prevent, its second to shorten war; and in the third place, when pacification was contemplated, to insure the acceptance of just and temperate terms of peace, so that the seeds of future disquiet and inevitable struggle should not occur at the very moment when general tranquillity appeared to be about to be accomplished. The last instance of an armed neutrality had been the occupation of the Danubian provinces

by Austria; and no one would deny that that act on the part of Austria greatly tended to shorten the Crimean war. Such a policy, however, had not been adopted by the government, and perhaps ministers, from their point of view, were in the right. An armed neutrality was a very serious thing for a nation that for a year and a half had been disbanding its veterans; an armed neutrality was a very serious thing for a nation with skeleton battalions, and attenuated squadrons, and batteries without sufficient guns, and yet more guns than gunners; an armed neutrality was a very serious thing for a nation without a military reserve; and an armed neutrality was a very serious thing for a great naval power which, during the last year and a half, had left off ship-building, had reduced her crews, had failed to furnish due artillery to her men of war, and had not increased her stores. Under such a system of reduction and retrenchment an armed neutrality was of course impossible. Still, had an armed neutrality been adopted, had England resolved to maintain the guarantees entered into by the treaty of Vienna, the war, if it could not have been prevented, would at least have been shortened, and have been instrumental in obtaining just and temperate terms for the discomfited, and have given a different character to Europe.

"For," said Mr. Disraeli, "let me impress upon the attention of the House the character of this war between France and Germany. It is no common war, like the war between Prussia and Austria, or like the Italian war in which France was engaged some years ago; nor is it like the Crimean war. This war represents the German revolution, a greater political event than the French revolution of last century. I don't say a greater, or as great a social event. What its social consequences may be, are in the future. Not a single principle in the management of our foreign affairs, accepted by all statesmen for guidance up to six months ago, any longer exists. There is not a diplomatic tradition which has not

been swept away. You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope, at present involved in that obscurity incident to novelty in such affairs. We need to have discussions in this House about the balance of power. Lord Palmerston, eminently a practical man, trimmed the ship of state and shaped its policy with a view to preserve an equilibrium in Europe. But what has really come to pass? The balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of this great change most, is England."

Then, by an easy transition, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to show that, owing to the destruction of this balance of power in Europe, Russia had not hesitated to withdraw from her solemn obligations. Russia had repudiated the treaty of 1856. There was nothing in diplomatic history so unqualified as the repudiation of the settlement of 1856 by Russia. He was not about to inveigh against the designs of Russia. "Russia," continued the leader of the Opposition, "has a policy, as every great power has a policy, and she has as much right to have a policy as Germany or England. I believe the policy of Russia, taking a general view of it, to have been a legitimate policy, although it may have been inevitably a disturbing policy. When you have a great country in the centre of Europe, with an immense territory, with a numerous and yet, as compared with its colossal area, a sparse population, producing human food to any extent, in addition to certain most valuable raw materials, it is quite clear that a people so situated, practically without any seaboard, would never rest until it found its way to the coast, and could have a mode of communicating easily with other nations and exchanging its products with them. Well, for two hundred years Russia has pursued that policy; it has been a legitimate though a disturbing policy. It has cost Sweden provinces, and it has cost Turkey provinces. But no wise statesman

could help feeling that it was a legitimate policy—a policy which it was impossible to resist, and one which the general verdict of the world recognized—that Russia should find her way to the sea coast. She has completely accomplished it. She has admirable seaports; she can communicate with every part of the world, and she has profited accordingly. But at the end of the last century she advanced a new view. It was not a national policy; it was invented by the then ruler of Russia—a woman, a stranger, and an usurper—and that policy was that she must have the capital of the Turkish empire. That was not a legitimate, that was a disturbing policy. It was a policy like the French desire to have the Rhine—false in principle. She had no moral claim to Constantinople; she did not represent the races to which it once belonged; she had no political necessity to go there, because she had already two capitals. Therefore it was not a legitimate, but a disturbing policy. As the illegitimate desire of France to have the Rhine has led to the prostration of France, so the illegitimate desire of Russia to have Constantinople led to the prostration of Russia."

Mr. Disraeli then criticised the conduct of the government in objecting to the repudiation by Russia of the treaty of Paris. He did not think the course pursued was a wise one. Ministers should have protested against the note of Prince Gortschakoff, and have said at once that Russia must take the consequences of such a step. Had the government thus acted, in all probability nothing more would have been heard of the meditated repudiation. What were the circumstances under which the treaty of Paris was negotiated? He had never been one of those who considered the Crimean war a great mistake. He considered that it might have been prevented, but when war had been declared he believed it was a just and necessary war; and he believed that never had a war been carried on for a nobler purpose or with purer intentions. There was a great demur at the time

as to the terms of peace, since they were not thought adequate. Still in his opinion, remarked Mr. Disraeli, the treaty was admirable because it devised a plan for neutralizing the Black Sea, which absolutely, so far as human arrangements could control affairs, really prevented that part of the world from again disturbing the general peace. That treaty was a magnanimous treaty, and was so regarded by Russia. It did not call upon Russia to yield up any of her provinces, nor did it call upon her to pay a heavy indemnity; but it terminated the naval preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, and thus secured peace in the future. Yet that result, for which such sacrifices had been made, was now to be abandoned! To obtain that result the allies expended £300,000,000 of treasure, lost invaluable human lives, fought four pitched battles, and entered upon two of the most terrific assaults ever known in the history of sieges. Hardly a family in England, from the haughtiest to the humblest, but had some painful recollection of the sufferings and sacrifices of that war. Mothers, whose sons had fallen in that pitiless war, enjoyed the proud consolation that their children had died for their country. But now that consolation was to be taken away; those brave young men did not die either for the honour or the interest of their country—it was all moonshine! “I think,” cried Mr. Disraeli, “that the mothers of England will feel very differently in future, and the sons of England too will not be lavish of their lives if this mockery is to occur.”

Mr. Disraeli then turned his attention to matters across the Atlantic. He bitterly complained of the arrogant and offensive tone adopted by the United States towards this country, when advancing their claims for grievances to be redressed. The United States could be courteous to Germany and to Russia; but when they entered into communications with England they expressed their opinions after the most disrespectful fashion. What was the reason, asked Mr.

Disraeli, why the government and people of England were treated by the government of the United States in a different manner from that in which other countries were treated? “The reason of this offensive conduct of the United States,” he answered, “is this. There is a party in America who certainly do not monopolize the intelligence, the education, and the property of the country, and who I believe are not numerically the strongest, who attempt to obtain political power and to excite political passion by abusing England and its government, because they believe they can do so with impunity. These are the last men who would take this tone if they thought England would resent such conduct; but the idea is impressed upon them that they may insult the government of England with impunity. You may say if they have no really hostile intent, and it is a mere electioneering game, is it not better for us to be forbearing and contemptuous? Well, it is not exactly that. The danger is this—habitually exciting the passions of millions some unfortunate thing happens, or something unfortunate is said in either country; the fire lights up, it is beyond their control, and the two nations are landed in a contest which they can no longer control or prevent. As there is to be a commission it would be a very good opportunity for us to come to some clear understanding on the subject, and let it be known that England cannot be insulted or injured with impunity. Though I should look upon it as the darkest hour of my life if I were to counsel or even support in this House a war with the United States, still the United States should know that they are not an exception to the other countries of the world—that we do not permit ourselves to be insulted by any other country in the world—and that they cannot be an exception. If once our naval and military establishments were in that condition in which I hope on Thursday or some early day we shall find they are—if once it is known that Her Majesty’s dominions cannot

be assaulted without being adequately defended—all this rowdy rhetoric which is addressed to irresponsible millions, and as it is supposed with impunity, will I believe cease."

This patriotic warning was certainly not given before it was required. The foreign policy of the Liberal party—for Lord Palmerston was no Liberal in the present acceptation of the name—has never been a strong feature in their administration of affairs; but on the accession of Mr. Gladstone to office so sensitive was the new prime minister to the commercial interests of his supporters, that it was scarcely possible for his government to appear more meek and submissive when corresponding with a foreign power. The despatches that were forwarded from Whitehall to Paris, to Berlin, to Vienna, to St. Petersburg, and to Washington, were written in so humble and apologetic a tone for presuming to interfere and presuming to give advice and presuming to object, as to excite the contemptuous laughter of every secretary of embassy who perused them. "It is perfectly idle," wrote a continental newspaper, "to talk of the attitude of England, inasmuch as its policy admits of but one attitude—that of obliteration." Our opinion was not asked, our voice in the councils of Europe had no weight, and our remonstrances passed unheeded. Sir Robert Peel spoke truly when he said, "We are most unpopular abroad; we have lost caste abroad." Still this was only the beginning of things; we had to descend to far lower depths of national degradation before the Conservative reaction set in, and landed us upon the heights we once occupied.

A few days after the debate on the address Mr. Disraeli again (Feb. 24, 1871) spoke upon this act of repudiation by Russia. A more important theme, he said, could not engage the attention of parliament; and upon a right appreciation of all the circumstances connected with it the future power of England greatly depended, and more than that, the fortunes of no inconsiderable part of the globe. It

was necessary clearly to understand the question. In repudiating the conditions of the treaty of 1856, which referred to the neutral character of the Black Sea, Russia had repudiated the very gist of the whole subject, the very essence of the treaty. What was the history of that treaty? It was briefly this. After much correspondence had passed between London and Vienna, Paris and St. Petersburg, it was ascertained that peace might be negotiated on four points. The first point referred to the government of the Principalities. The second to the free navigation of the Danube. The third point was that some means were to be invented for terminating the naval supremacy of Russia in the Black Sea. The fourth point referred to the future protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte. A conference was held at Vienna, Russia having intimated that she was prepared to negotiate on those four points—that was to say, having admitted the principle which those four points embodied. The result of the negotiations was shortly this: The first two points, as framed by the allies, were after discussion admitted by Russia. The fourth point, which referred to the protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte, was never brought under formal discussion at the conference; but Russia privately intimated that she would accede to that fourth proposition, and so no difficulty arose in that case. But with regard to the third point, when the conference had to decide upon the means by which the naval supremacy of Russia was to be terminated in the Black Sea, great difficulties arose. It appeared that Russia having admitted the principle of the third point, the allies, with great courtesy and wisdom, suggested that Russia should herself propose the means by which that result should be attained. But, after waiting for instructions from St. Petersburg, the Russian negotiators declined to do that; and therefore the proposition of the allies for establishing the neutral character of the Black Sea

was brought forward, and that proposition, after considerable delay, and after waiting again for instructions from St. Petersburg, was utterly rejected by Russia.

The state of affairs, then, was this—Russia had consented formally to the first two propositions, and privately to the fourth. The government of the Principalities, the free navigation of the Danube, the due protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte, not by one power, but by all the powers—those points were all conceded; and the point upon which the negotiations for peace were broken off was the neutral character of the Black Sea. A great responsibility therefore rested upon the negotiators of the allies, and especially upon the English government, which took so eminent a lead in those negotiations. Was the war to be continued? Was immense treasure to be further expended, and great sacrifices of human life to be incurred, for that unsettled point—the neutralization of the Black Sea? It was an awful responsibility, no doubt, to decide on that point; but responsibility in a free state was not, or should not be, a source of annoyance to individuals, but rather of honourable pride; and it would be well for the House to remember, so far as England was concerned, who were the statesmen upon whom that great responsibility peculiarly devolved. The prime minister was Lord Palmerston; who, however some of his last feats of foreign policy might be questioned, must be admitted by all to be a man who had a most vigorous perception of what were the interests and duties of his country, and who at that time was unquestionably in the full exercise of his powers, and with no apparent diminution of that decision and that spirit with which he had always conducted foreign affairs. The secretary of state for foreign affairs was Lord Clarendon. The negotiator who represented England at Vienna was a nobleman who was a member of the House of Commons for nearly half a century, who had the largest experience of public affairs of any individual of their

time, who had occupied every office, from paymaster of the forces to president of the council, and who had been for seven years prime minister of England—Earl Russell.

Those were the men, continued Mr. Disraeli, upon whom, so far as England was concerned, peculiarly devolved the responsibility of deciding whether, under the circumstances, the war should be pursued. *They did not hesitate, in order to obtain the neutrality of the Black Sea, as it was expressed in the treaty of Paris negotiated the following year, to recommend their sovereign to prosecute the war, and not to cease until the allies had effected a settlement similar to that which Russia had rejected.* The war consequently continued another year; and the House and the country had never forgotten the circumstances—great glory and honour to the allies and to Russia also, much exhibition of heroic conduct on both sides, and on both sides no doubt unprecedented suffering. In the course of another year Russia was exhausted, and the treaty of Paris was negotiated. And what was that treaty? Russia was exhausted; but the allies, victorious and triumphant, though they had incurred immensely increased expenditure, and endured aggravated sacrifices of life, did not demand from Russia the Crimea, which they might have restored to Turkey. They did not demand any indemnity for the expenses of the war. All the points in that treaty, except the neutrality of the Black Sea, had been offered by Russia at Vienna in the preceding year, and therefore had been obtained by their negotiators in the first instance; but as a full satisfaction, as a settlement that completely justified the great exertions and sacrifices that had been incurred, as a settlement which they believed would secure the peace of the world, so far at least as that portion of it was concerned, *they insisted that the neutrality of the Black Sea should be accomplished.*

Mr. Disraeli here briefly alluded to cer-

tain correspondence then lying on the table, and which caused no little sensation at the time. Sir Andrew Buchanan, our representative at St. Petersburg, having informed Lord Granville of the repudiation by Russia, held himself in readiness to demand his passports, imagining that hostilities would ensue. Hostilities did not ensue, but the English government sent Mr. Odo Russell to Berlin to ask the advice of Prince Bismarck. The German chancellor recommended a conference; as we know, his counsel was accepted; and the conference, by meekly granting the demands of Russia, averted all chances of war. It appears, however, that at his first interview with Prince Bismarck, Mr. Odo Russell plainly declared that the question, as it then stood, was of such a nature as to compel England, with or without allies, to go to war with Russia. This bold assertion, it afterwards transpired, was made solely on the authority of Mr. Odo Russell, and was, some three weeks later, repudiated by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, who said that the envoy had had no authority for making such a statement. Mr. Disraeli complained that no immediate contradiction had been given by the government to this assertion of Mr. Odo Russell [now the right hon. Lord Odo Russell].

"For a special envoy," cried Mr. Disraeli, "to declare to a foreign minister that, with or without allies, we were prepared to go to war for a particular object, is one of the most decided announcements ever made upon political affairs. Admit that he had no authority to make the declaration—an admission which is overwhelming in its incredibility—why was no despatch written by the secretary of state to contradict the declaration? Why was no printed record made with the frankness becoming an English government, so that the indiscretion of the special agent should not be concealed from us? Why did we not learn that, at the moment when Her Majesty's government heard of such an announcement, the special envoy was told by a flash of light-

ning that he had exceeded his authority? Sir, there is not a line, not a scrap, not a jot to this effect; and until the inquiry was made and the answer given by the right hon. gentleman, no one doubted for a moment, looking to the character of the official papers, that the declaration was made by authority, and that Mr. Odo Russell was sent to Count Bismarck to make it."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to discuss the reasons given by Mr. Gladstone for consenting to this ignoble repudiation by a great power of its honourable pledges. "I have now, sir," he continued, "placed before the House these remarks, the object of which is to show, first, that I was entirely justified in the description I gave of the condition relating to the neutrality of the Black Sea in the treaty of Paris on the first night of the session—that it was the cardinal point of British policy; that it was always so considered; that for it, and for it alone, the war was continued and the greatest sacrifices made. I think I have also shown, from the papers furnished us by the government, that until within a brief space—which we shall probably hear more about on another occasion—the cabinet was faithful and firm to this policy, and that men of the vast experience of our ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg, and the great ability of our special envoy at the court of Versailles, were instructed—and, I think, admirably instructed—how to treat such a violation of the law of nations and of public morality. And now, sir, having, I hope, placed this matter fairly before the House, let me advert to the remarkable manner in which my observations upon that head were met by the right hon. gentleman on the first night of the session. I had endeavoured to recall to the recollection of the House the vital importance of the neutralization of the Black Sea. I did not enter into any proof of a policy which I believe was supported by the people of this country and by the majority of the House, and upon which it

appeared to me it was then far from necessary to enter into any controversy. I was content to confine myself to an opinion as to the vital importance of the neutralization of the Black Sea. What said the right hon. gentleman? Lest I may be accused of inaccuracy, I avail myself of a memorandum containing, I believe, an accurate report of the statement made by the right hon. gentleman. He entirely joined issue with me as to the vital importance of the neutralization of the Black Sea. He said, 'That was never, as far as I know, the view of the British government.' The right hon. gentleman said:—

'In this House, in the year 1856, I declared my confident conviction that it was impossible to maintain the neutralization of the Black sea. I do not speak from direct communication with Lord Clarendon; but I have been told since his death that he never attached value to that neutralization. Again, I do not speak from direct communication, but I have been told that Lord Palmerston always looked upon the neutralization as an arrangement which might be maintained and held together for

a limited number of years,* but which, from its character, it was impossible to maintain as a permanent condition for a great settlement of Europe.'

"Now, sir, upon these startling observations of the right hon. gentleman I will make one or two remarks. And, first, when the right hon. gentleman says the vital importance of the neutralization of the Black Sea was never, as far as he knew, the view of the British government, and that he had declared his confident conviction in 1856 that it would be impossible to maintain it, I would observe that the right hon. gentleman—unintentionally of course—conveyed an erroneous impression to the House by allowing himself to mix up his own individual opinions with those of the British government. [Mr. Gladstone—'No, I do not admit it.'] Does the right hon. gentleman complain of the accuracy of the report? Of course, I shall take any explanation which the right hon. gentleman has to offer; and if he said exactly the reverse of what is attributed to him, no one will congratulate the House and the country more sincerely than I shall. But, sir, when

* This opinion is at direct variance with Lord Palmerston's published correspondence. Upon the four points (the Principalities, the free navigation of the Danube, Russian supremacy in the Black Sea, and the independence of the Porte) Lord Palmerston distinctly writes to Lord John Russell that "the two important points of the four are the first and the third." The third point was the one which "would afford us security for the future," and was the chief object "for which we undertook the war;" and if peace was drawn up contrary to its demand, "we should receive the general condemnation which we should rightly deserve." "Austria," he writes, "evidently means to throw us over on the third point; and if that is to happen, the sooner we are undeceived as to her intentions the better. Her substitutes for a narrow limitation of the Russian Black Sea fleet are, as you say, futile. The opening of the Straits would be a standing danger to the Sultan with no compensating advantage; but, on the contrary, with probable inconvenience to England and France. The maintenance by us and the French of permanent fleets in the Black Sea to counter-balance the fleet of Russia is simply a *mauvaise plaisanterie*. The stipulation that Russia should not have a larger fleet than she now has, even assuming that the sunken ships are not to count, would still leave her with too powerful a naval force; and it must be remembered that it is easy to build steamers which, though unarmed at first, may easily be strengthened and turned into ships of war."—*To Lord John Russell, March 28, 1855*. Again: "We ought to stand firm as to having all the stipulations about the Black Sea made parts of the treaty between Russia and all the belligerents. I can fancy how I should be hooted in the House of Commons if I were to get up and say that we had agreed to

an imperfect and unsatisfactory arrangement about one of the most important parts of the whole matter, as a personal favour to Count Buol or to save the *amour propre* of Russia. I had better beforehand take the Chiltern Hundreds."—*To Lord Clarendon, November 26, 1855*. Once more: Early in 1856 Count Buol, in the name of Austria, had proposed as an acceptable variation of the disputed fourth point that "no fleet and no naval station of any country should be permitted in the Black Sea." This suggestion Lord Palmerston branded as "impertinent;" he would have the Black Sea clause as originally drawn up, and if Russia refused the war should proceed. "We know," he writes, "the exhaustion, the internal pressure, difficulties, and distress of Russia quite as well as Buol does; but we know better than he does our own resources and strength. He may rest assured, however, that we have no wish to continue the war for the prospect of what we may accomplish another year, if we can now obtain peace upon the conditions which we deem absolutely necessary and essential; but we are quite prepared to go on if such conditions cannot be obtained. The British nation is unanimous in this matter. I say unanimous, for I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright, & Co. for anything; and even if the government were not kept straight by a sense of our public duty, the strong feeling which prevails throughout the country would make it impossible for us to swerve."—*To Sir Hamilton Seymour, January 24, 1856*. So much for the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's assertion. As the reformers in 1832 went for "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill," so stout-hearted Lord Palmerston went for "the Black Sea clause, the unaltered Black Sea clause, and nothing but the Black Sea clause."—*See "Life of Lord Palmerston," by the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, vol. ii., pp. 85, 87, 105, and 107.*

the right hon. gentleman talks of the views of the British government, and brings forward himself as an authority, allow me to inform the House—because some time has elapsed, and we fortunately have a good many young members among us, and some old ones—that when the right hon. gentleman made this speech against the importance of the neutralization of the Black Sea in 1856 he was not a minister of the crown, nor was he the leader of the Opposition. The right hon. gentleman was connected in this House with a minute coterie of distinguished men, who had no following in the country at the time. They were condemned by the country on account of their conduct with respect to this very question of the Black Sea and Turkish affairs generally.

“Rightly or wrongly—I will not enter into the question now—the country was convinced that the Crimean war was occasioned by the lukewarmness and the hesitation of this small body of distinguished men. But of these distinguished men the most unpopular in the country was the right hon. gentleman; because, when war was inevitable, and was even declared by the cabinet of Lord Aberdeen, the right hon. gentleman at that time having the control of the finances, it became necessary that he should propose the ways and means for carrying on the war, and the country was of opinion that the proposals of the right hon. gentleman were not adequate to the occasion, and were not such as the honour and interest of England demanded. The people of England remembered a celebrated item moved by the right hon. gentleman in committee of supply—namely, a vote proposed by him, in a spirit of ironical finance, for the despatch of Her Majesty's Guards to Malta and back again. They never forgot and never forgave that item. They foresaw then, with an instinct of Englishmen which it is impossible to deceive, that we were bound to prosecute a war in a spirit which must bring calamity and disaster upon the country. Such was the position of the right hon. gentleman;

and, therefore, the House must not be influenced by his statement of the views of the British government of that time. He did not represent the British government. He represented no party in this House, nor any party in this country.

“I come now to the statement of the right hon. gentleman about Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston. It was a very responsible thing, I ventured to say, to advise the continuance of the war in 1855. *But almost as responsible a thing, in my opinion, is it to impute to statesmen of great eminence, and now unfortunately departed, opinions not only which they did not hold, but which were contrary to their convictions, which contradicted their whole policy, and which would intimate that public men of the highest distinction who proposed a policy, in enforcing which the treasure of the country was expended without stint, and the most precious lives of the country were sacrificed, were laughing in their sleeves at the excitement of the nation.* I would make one remark respecting those extraordinary quotations of the opinions of Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston as to the neutralization of the Black Sea. Nothing can be more inconvenient and injurious to the privileges of this House than such quotations by ministers of the private opinions of their colleagues—and especially if those colleagues are deceased. Why, we are so punctilious on these matters that a minister is not even permitted to quote from a despatch without laying it upon the table. There would be an end to all freedom and force of discussion if it were in the power of a minister to get up and say—‘You have taken such and such a view of affairs, but your facts are wrong,’ and thus to carry away the House by some declaration of which we had no proof whatever. Every one must feel that we cannot be too rigid in the application of our rules on such matters; and even if the right hon. gentleman was convinced that these were the private opinions of Lord Clarendon and of Lord Palmerston, he was not justified in

referring to the private conversations of ministers who are since dead.

"I am not here to vindicate the honour either of Lord Clarendon or of Lord Palmerston. There are those in this House connected with Lord Clarendon by blood, and who, moreover, resemble him in his capacity of conducting public affairs. An eminent relative of Lord Clarendon has a seat in this House, and upon him should devolve the duty of defending the noble earl's memory from such misstatements. Nor am I here to vindicate the honour of Lord Palmerston; but I may make one observation with regard to that distinguished man, because it may throw some little light on these painful disclosures which have agitated and surprised so many persons. We have also had it stated in 'another place' that Lord Palmerston made some light observation to a diplomatist who spoke to him on the subject of our policy with regard to the Black Sea.* Now, everybody who knew Lord Palmerston well knew this of him—that with a smiling countenance he often evaded inconvenient discussions on serious affairs. Lord Palmerston was a man who, when most serious, availed himself very often of the weapon of banter; and not merely the diplomatist in question—and I do not seek to inquire who he is—but many diplomatists, if they would only acknowledge it, would confess that when they have wearied Lord Palmerston with their grave assiduity, or have attempted to pump Lord Palmerston with their practical adroitness, he has often unsheathed his glittering foil, and has soon disarmed and disabled inconvenient opponents. Lord Palmerston was a master of banter, and disliked discussion of grave matters when not in his cabinet or in this House. But I cannot refrain from recording my solemn conviction, that the policy of Lord Palmerston with respect to maintaining the

neutrality of the Black Sea never wavered for a moment, and that nothing but securing that great condition of the treaty of Paris would have reconciled him to the comparative leniency of the other terms.

"Now, sir, I hope I have vindicated myself from the charge that I was not authorized in the description which I gave the first night of the session, of the importance of the neutrality of the Black Sea; that I was not justified in saying that it was the cardinal principle of the settlement of 1856; that these were the opinions of Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Russell; that they broke up the negotiations at Vienna; and that the war was renewed, or rather continued, solely with the view to maintain that condition. I think I have shown that the policy then adopted by Her Majesty's government was the policy not only of Lord Clarendon, but that it must also have been that of Lord Granville up to a very recent period."

Next to the ignominious character of the policy of the government, was its discreditable supervision of our finances. Mr. Lowe undoubtedly enjoys the reputation of being the worst chancellor of the exchequer that ever controlled the purse of the nation. He had had no preparatory training in the framing of budgets; he had exhibited no special aptitude for dealing with accounts; he was far from an authority on matters of commerce or on political economy; and in addition to a sublime self-confidence which scorned advice, he was the victim of certain crotchety ideas which were most dangerous for a finance minister to entertain. His appointment as chancellor of the exchequer was viewed with terror and indignation by all the commercial classes, and the manner in which he drew up his "harum-scarum budgets" fully justified the light in which he was regarded by practical business men. Shortly after Easter Mr. Lowe introduced his financial statement, and it at once encountered severe opposition. The excess of expenditure over revenue was estimated at something more than £2,500,000. To meet

* "General Ignatieff told me that he remarked to Lord Palmerston, 'These are stipulations which you cannot expect will last long;' and Lord Palmerston replied, 'They will last ten years.'—Lord Granville, *House of Lords*, February 14, 1871.

this deficit Mr. Lowe proposed to make a raid upon the probate, legacy, and succession duties. Where a man paid probate duty he was to pay legacy duty, and where he paid legacy duty he was to pay probate duty. The succession duties were also to be increased. A tax was to be imposed on lucifer matches. The income tax was to be raised, and to be imposed for the future by percentage. Such were the leading suggestions made by Mr. Lowe, and they were warmly disapproved of. The tax on matches excited so vehement an opposition among the poverty-stricken persons at the east end of London, who eked out a miserable livelihood by being engaged in the trade, that the objectionable imposition was speedily withdrawn. Subsequently the succession duties shared the same fate, and the loss thus sustained was compensated for by the brilliant idea of adding another penny to the long-suffering and convenient income tax.

Mr. Disraeli had now for some sessions refrained from criticising the statements of the chancellor of the exchequer; but the blunders of Mr. Lowe were of too gross and glaring a character to pass without some comment from the leader of the Opposition. Throughout the whole of the session Mr. Disraeli amused himself and his audience by girding at the financial policy of Mr. Lowe. He complained that "at this time last year the chancellor of the exchequer reduced the indirect taxation of the country to the amount of nearly £3,000,000, and this year he is proposing to increase the taxation by nearly the same amount." He protested against a budget which consisted solely of an increased income tax, a tax which was essentially a war tax. This protest caused him to allude to the prime minister. When in 1868 Mr. Disraeli had raised the income tax on account of the Abyssinian war, Mr. Gladstone had attacked him for describing such imposition as a war tax. Yet England was at war with Abyssinia, and the income tax was certainly a war tax. "The right hon. gentleman became

positively furious," cried Mr. Disraeli. "I should like to hear him propose a war tax; for if upon a subject so essentially peaceable as this he has dissertated upon to-night he could work himself up to such a pitch of indignation—but I forgot. He did propose a war tax with regard to the Crimean war, and then he was as mild as a lamb. I quite forgot that. I quite forgot, and I suppose he quite forgot . . . that that war was mainly owing to the timidity of that government of which he was a member. This is the minister who now reproaches the Conservative party, and who says that when he was a member of the Conservative party they looked to the future. Well, I hope the Conservative party will always have a due and modest regard to that which may occur; but I always thought it was rather characteristic of the Conservative party that it looked to the past and revered the past. And animated by the remembrance of what the Tory party has done, I may say we shall not be put down by the gibes of the right hon. gentleman, although he once stood in our ranks. I shall not forget the traditions of that party, and I therefore will never give my consent to raising the ways and means of the year entirely by direct taxation. I will, remembering the traditions of that party, remember that it is my duty to support the interests of the poorer classes of the community. I will not be prevented, in a committee of ways and means brought forward in this preposterous manner, from endeavouring to ascertain the cause why a government defeated and discomfited propose measures which they themselves have denounced. I will, remembering the traditions of that party, not be afraid of opposing a minister who, I think, has shown this evening that he has no regard for those classes of the country for whom he always affects to have so peculiar a sympathy."

When discussing the customs and income-tax bill in committee (May 18, 1871), Mr. Disraeli again commented upon the unsatisfactory nature of the Liberal

budget, recapitulating many of his former objections. The chief evil, however, in his opinion, was that the budget introduced the principle of depending on a source of taxation which pressed entirely upon the upper and middle classes. There was a "sweet simplicity" about the whole affair. After abortive attempts at indirect taxation, the chancellor of the exchequer withdrew his first budget, and then introduced a second, which was simply a sixpenny income tax. Yet the chancellor of the exchequer, when introducing his first budget, had expressly declared that the deficit ought not to be made good solely by means of direct taxation, and that of all modes of direct taxes the one to which he should the least willingly have recourse was the income tax! The budget was nothing less than a scheme to meet the deficit by levying a very heavy income tax. There was certainly not very much originality or fertility of resource in such a proposal. "The income tax," said Mr. Disraeli, "is a subject which most of us understand, and of which most of us feel the sting; but, at the same time, it is one inexhaustible in its interest. The income tax is a tax which is noted for the facilities with which it is collected, and the affluent results it procures for the Treasury. It may be said also that such a feature in our financial returns is a source of great power to this country, adding considerably to the substantial credit which this country enjoys; while the fact of its existence, it is well known, influences and regulates the conduct of foreign powers. They know very well that England, if necessary, can engage in war and carry on a campaign without loans, by the power which she possesses of appealing to the income tax; and that if this tax now at a moment of great emergency were raised to the amount which it arrived at in the time of Mr. Pitt, or even of Lord Liverpool, we should have a tax in our financial system which alone can produce a sum, without distressing the nation, of £25,000,000. These are the great features in favour of the income

tax. Against the tax, it must be said that it is unequal and unjust in its incidence; and what is more, there is no financial genius in the world that can remove that inequality and that injustice. It has been tried in the person of the first lord of the Treasury [Mr. Gladstone]. No man was ever more sensible of the inequality and injustice of this tax than the right hon. gentleman; no one has denounced them in language more fervent; and no one has confessed more completely that all his attempts to remove this serious objection to the tax were baffled. Therefore, he said—and many of us remember his saying the words—'There is only one mode by which we can terminate its inequality and injustice, and that is by terminating the tax itself.' And the right hon. gentleman brought forward his proposal to that effect, which will always, I think, confer on him the greatest honour. This is a tax, therefore, that one can resort to on a great emergency. When the country is in danger; when its fame, and honour, and its dearest interests are concerned, the great body of the population does not trouble itself about the exact incidence of the tax; everybody is prepared to make sacrifices, and, in the national excitement that then exists, the objections to an income tax cease to influence a minister. But a tax so unequal and unjust as that should, I think, be resorted to only in cases of emergency; it should not be an habitual part of our financial system, severely pinching as it does, according to the chancellor of the exchequer, the poorer middle class. The tax is also most inquisitorial, and upon that ground, too, it is odious to the country. Now that is the tax a great increase of which we have been obliged to have recourse to in consequence of the alleged deficiency in our revenue, and in consequence of the manner in which that alleged deficiency was brought before us. . . . I do not say this as an enemy of direct taxation. I have always maintained that direct taxation must form a due proportion

of our financial system. I think it does form a due proportion, and I would resist any attempt to diminish its fair share of the national burden, which the figures I have quoted show it bears. It is for the House, however, to say whether they will sanction the course which the government proposes for our adoption. The question is one on which it will ultimately be forced to express its opinion. The country, when it clearly comprehends that the government are laying down a system of raising the revenue for the future by direct taxation, will, I cannot help believing, support its representatives in resistance to such a policy."

The Liberal majority, however, rallied to the rescue of Mr. Lowe, and saved the "sweet simplicity" of his budget. The House had disapproved of the match tax, and it had been withdrawn; the doubling of the succession duties had been disapproved of, and withdrawn; and the mode of computing the income tax by a percentage had also been withdrawn. To disapprove of the raising of the income tax to twopence, after the rejection of two successive budgets, would have caused the government to seriously consider the question of resignation, since it is the custom of the ministerial party always to support the financial proposals of the cabinet. The dissatisfied Liberals were not prepared to push matters to this extremity; and the budget, though it considerably weakened the hold the government had upon the country, was accepted.

Prominent among the reforms that the Gladstone cabinet was anxious to effect was the reorganization of the army. When patronage and privilege were being vigorously attacked on all sides, it was scarcely probable that the system of military promotion, which was then dependent more upon the command of bullion than of brains, would long survive. Among all the powers England stood alone in preferring the system of promotion in her army by purchase to promotion by merit. With the exception

of certain branches of the service, an officer obtained his commission by purchase, and, save in war time, obtained his promotion after the same plutocratic fashion. A man grown grey in the pursuit of arms, but whose balance at his agent's would not permit him to buy the grades above him, saw the company to which he aspired or the rank and duties of a field-officer intrusted to some comparative youngster, whose purse was perhaps better filled than his head. A commission then represented personal property, and had two prices put upon it—the regulation price, which was simply nominal, and the real price, which, according to the competition excited, was often far more than the regulation price. The subject had frequently come up for discussion and inquiry; still the result arrived at was generally in favour of a continuance of the purchase system. All Englishmen were brave; and it was considered far more advisable that an English officer, whilst possessing the national courage, should at the same time be a gentleman accustomed to the ways and fashions of gentlemen, than some enlightened member of the masses with only brains and a baptismal certificate, who might murder the language of his sovereign, eat like a ghou! at mess, and fail to command the respect of the privates in the regiment. The system of purchase had been warmly approved of by such great soldiers as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Raglan, and had been considered by them to further promotion and retirement, and to secure physical efficiency among the officers. Doubtless the system had its advantages as well as its drawbacks; still, as Lord Derby remarked, no institution was tenable in England which could not be defended by arguments intelligible to the mass of the constituency, and in the public mind the impression prevailed that promotion by purchase was unfair, unsound, and afforded undue and corrupt advantages to the rich.

The task of army reform was intrusted to Mr. Cardwell. His scheme was clear

and easily to be grasped. He proposed to substitute promotion by merit for promotion by purchase, and to effect a thorough reorganization of the army by combining the different forces of which it was composed—the regular army, the militia, the reserves, and the volunteers. The proposal was thus divided into two heads—the abolition of purchase, and the scheme of reorganization. As the session advanced it became evident, from the opposition which the measure for the abolition of purchase encountered, that the second head—the scheme of reorganization—would have to be sacrificed. Mr. Cardwell supported the views of the government with great ability. He traced the history of the purchase system. The practice of purchase, he said, had been co-existent with the existence of the English army; it had been prohibited by William III. for a short time, but had been revived in 1701, and shortly afterwards rules and regulations had been drawn up respecting it. In 1857 a royal commission had been appointed to inquire into the system; and the report issued by the commissioners showed how carefully both sides of the question had been investigated. On the one side it was contended that the system of purchase was vicious in principle, repugnant to public feeling, and inconsistent with the honour of the military profession; it impaired the efficiency of the army by giving an undue pre-eminence to wealth, discouraging exertion, and depressing merit; it encouraged habits of expense, and dissipation injurious to discipline and embarrassing to the poorer officers; whilst the difference between the regulation price and the real price paid for commissions led to traffic and bargaining among the officers, whereby a mercenary feeling was created in men “whose guiding principles should be a nice sense of honour and a disinterested attachment to the public service.” On the other hand, the commissioners declared that the feeling of the army was generally in favour of the continuance of

the system of purchase, on the ground that it facilitated retirement and was a security against favour. They, however, pointed out that, since the command of a battalion was a most important trust, no man ought to have the lives of his fellow-subjects committed to his charge unless he was fully competent to undertake the duties placed in his hands. The commissioners therefore recommended that, with regard to the command of a battalion, the system of purchase should be abolished. Fourteen years, remarked Mr. Cardwell, had passed since that recommendation had been issued, and the government had now resolved to deal with the question. The purchase system was to be abolished, due regard being paid to compensation; and promotion in the army was to be for the future on the principle of selection.

The objections to this scheme came chiefly from the Conservative party, and they were far from being ill-considered or unpractical. It was said that promotion by selection would end in promotion by favouritism, that the abolition of the purchase system would entail an enormous outlay upon the country, that the qualities and gifts to be possessed by an officer could not be discovered by a system of competitive examinations, and that the abolition of purchase would tend to alter the relations between the officers and their men.

Mr. Disraeli left the discussion of the details of the bill to his military supporters; but on the occasion of the amendment of Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay against the abolition of purchase, he said (March 17, 1871) a few words. He did not consider the provisions of the measure, on the whole, satisfactory. He did not ask for minute details; but he should like to see more clearly the means by which the army was to be made more efficient, by which ample and adequate reserves were to be obtained, and by which the whole of their military means and arms were to be placed under one simple and supreme organization. The bill, he thought, was very slight and

shadowy. Still, though he objected to many of its details, he would give the measure his support. "I cannot," he said, "because I find the bill inadequate on the whole, and less vigorous and decisive than I imagined, reconcile it to myself, or bring my mind to think that it is my duty to oppose the main question that is before us—namely, the second reading of the bill. But I do so, I confess, with the conviction that if we go into committee on the bill it will not be a formal committee, but a real working committee; that the provisions of the measure may be strengthened; that we may see in this bill something of that doctrine of evolution which is so fashionable at present; and that the tentative efforts and certain indications and dispositions of Her Majesty's government, which are now only faintly adumbrated, may by the encouragement and interference of the committee be brought out in substantial legislation; in fine, that we may see many of their suggestions carried out in vigorous, masculine, and commanding provisions."

Then he touched upon the question of abolishing the system of purchase. It was one of those subjects which had perplexed mankind for a considerable period. A great deal might be said on both sides; it was a question very much belonging to the same class as marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Each side was convinced that its solution was the only one absolutely necessary for the welfare of society; while calmer minds, who did not take so extreme an interest in the subject, were of opinion that, whichever way it might be decided, it was possible affairs might go on much the same. But as the question of purchase had now assumed a financial character, it was of the utmost importance that the House of Commons should proceed cautiously and prudently in the matter. "I would say at once," he continued, "if there be a great desire in the country, upon a question like purchase, that we should put an end to it, a minister would

in my opinion be most unwise to oppose it, provided he is convinced that the country really understands the question and fully knows the cost about to be incurred in order to obtain the satisfaction of that desire. If the country is suddenly become so squeamish and scrupulous that it cannot endure the idea of the state selling a commission—if that be the passion of the people at present—I am quite of opinion that that is a sentiment that ought to be well considered and perhaps deferred to by a minister. But I say, before a minister assents to some proposition which is supported by public passion and which may be a source of considerable expenditure, he ought to be sure that the country really comprehends the question before it; and that when people say they are ready to make a sacrifice to effect their object, they may not afterwards repent of their generous indiscretion, and turn round on the government and say, 'See in what disaster you have involved us.' Therefore, as far as the question whether the state should sell a military commission or not is concerned, if the country is of opinion that it is a violation of that sublime equity which becomes a nation, and can afford to pay for what they desire, I think a minister is quite justified in proposing and prosecuting a scheme for the purpose."

The amendment of Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay was to the effect, that the demands upon the exchequer did not justify at present any vote of public money for the extinction of purchase in the army. The government had estimated some £8,000,000 as sufficient to be devoted to the compensations consequent upon the abolition of purchase. Mr. Disraeli, however, considered that the country must be prepared to pay a far larger amount; still that was a question for committee, and he suggested that Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay should withdraw his amendment and allow the bill to pass the second reading without a division. "This is a subject," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "which at this moment engages not only the

attention of this country, but of Europe generally. The eyes of Europe are on England reorganizing her army. It is therefore of importance that we should on the main question show, if possible, an unbroken front. I expressed the same views on the first night of the session. I then took the liberty of intimating my opinion that whatever might be the measure of the government when introduced, so long as it was a *bonâ fide* measure for the reorganization of the army—and I do not think any candid person can doubt the *animus* of the measure, though he may believe its provisions to be inadequate—it should receive at our hands the fairest consideration. The *animus* of the measure is surely good, and the proposal of the government is the first attempt to weld the three great arms of the country—the regulars, the militia, and the volunteers—into one great force. Though many of us may think that the machinery proposed is not sufficient for its purposes, these are not in my opinion reasons sufficient to justify us in opposing in any way the second reading.” Mr. Disraeli therefore advised Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay to withdraw his amendment, and to leave his suggestions to be discussed in committee. The advice was acted upon, and the bill was read a second time.

Still the measure encountered the fiercest opposition, as clause by clause came under discussion. The military element in the House of Commons formed itself into a little band of “obstructionists,” and carried out its thoroughly discreditable tactics with such skill and tenacity as to make Mr. Gladstone cry out, after an irritating and misspent four months, that unless the Opposition mended its ways legislation would be physically impossible. The “colonels” were then setting an example which was afterwards to be closely followed by the home rulers. So completely had the obstructionists succeeded in their designs, that in the second week of June Mr. Cardwell felt himself compelled to

announce that in consequence of the opposition to the bill the government would abandon part of their measure, and only insist upon the purchase clauses and the transfer of power over the militia and volunteers from the lords-lieutenant to the crown. To this course Mr. Disraeli (June 12, 1871) strongly objected. He had accepted the bill as a whole, and not as a part, and on that understanding had advised his followers to agree to the second reading. He regarded the bill as the result of the decided wish of the country for the reorganization and improvement of the forces, and because it would establish an efficient army founded on an adequate reserve. He protested against the course the government was taking, since ministers were not complying with their engagements to establish an efficient army founded on an adequate reserve. The question of purchase, though an important, was by no means a paramount or even essential part of the bill, and that interpretation had been accepted by the government. He had never recognized the abolition of purchase as the principle of the bill for the reorganization of the army, and he declined to regard the question in that limited and restricted light. The discussions on the subject of purchase had opened very serious objections to the proposition of the government. It had been felt that the abolition of purchase would involve the country in vast and indefinite expenditure, and that it would abolish an existing system without proposing any substitute in its place. “In the face of those great objections,” said Mr. Disraeli, “I do not think that Her Majesty’s government are entitled to press forward the abolition of purchase, and at the same time avoid the fulfilment of the object which the country proposed to itself, and which I think Her Majesty’s government are bound to accomplish. If it is their opinion that they have not time during the present session adequately and completely to deal with it, if they think that they cannot pass a measure which will

fulfil the expectations of the country and the necessities of the state, it is open to them to withdraw their measure and introduce one next session which will deal with the whole question in all its bearings; and I cannot but believe that that course would be far more satisfactory to the country. The country never can be satisfied by a mode of dealing with so great a question as the military organization of the country in a manner so imperfect, and now apparently so hurried, and so little calculated to meet the expectations entertained throughout the country when parliament assembled. Under these circumstances I must enter my protest against the conduct of the government. I do not see how, if they withdraw those important provisions for welding together the regulars, the militia, and the volunteers, and proceed only with the provision for the abolition of purchase, they can ask the House to read such a measure a third time. This is not the bill to which we gave our assent on the second reading. Her Majesty's government are not treating the House in a straightforward manner in pursuing that course. There is a want of candour and ingenuousness in their conduct, which I should be sorry to see distinguish the conduct of any public men; and so far as I am personally concerned, I feel some humiliation in having been induced to advise my friends to agree to the second reading of a bill, which I now find withdrawn as to all the important provisions which induced me to give that advice to my friends."

Mr. Gladstone replied in his most shrewish tones. He was not surprised at the sentiment of humiliation experienced by Mr. Disraeli, for the recent proceedings of the Opposition had certainly given occasion for such a feeling. As to the want of candour and ingenuousness on the part of the government, that was no doubt very painful also for Mr. Disraeli to bear. Still he denied that the government had not been straightforward in their proceedings. The government had

never regarded the abolition of purchase as a very secondary portion of the bill. It had been the chief subject of discussion during the last few months, and had been regarded both by the House and the country as the very essence of the measure. He had no intention of withdrawing the bill, continued the prime minister, though he was much obliged for the advice; but he purposed to lighten the bill of various clauses, in order to get it through during the present session. The government were not to blame for their abandonment of the second part of the scheme; such desertion was due entirely to the Opposition, who, by their factious conduct, had done all in their power to make legislation a physical impossibility.

After a few weeks' more discussion, the bill passed through the Lower House. "The colonels" had been silenced by a strong hint from Mr. Cardwell, that if he chose he could stop the payment of extra-regulation money by putting the law in force. The trousers pocket is a very sensitive portion of the human frame, and the military element thought it better to desist from their peculiar tactics, and not make an enemy of one who was too powerful to be attacked with impunity. The bill was therefore read a third time, and sent up to the House of Lords. In its altered form it abolished purchase, deprived the lords-lieutenant of counties of their former power of appointing officers in the militia, restored the government of the army to the state, and enabled parliament to fix from year to year the number of militia.

The tone of the Upper House, as was to be expected from the strong Conservative element in its opposition, was adverse to the measure. All the old stock objections, which had been so freely employed in the House of Commons, again did good service to damage the government plan. The purchase system, it was asserted, afforded a cheap scheme of retirement, and secured a rapid flow of promotion; purchase and professional education were quite com-

patible things; the officers as a body were opposed to the measure; there was no necessity for its introduction; it would saddle the country with a vast expenditure; and, in short, everything good in the new scheme could be obtained without the abolition of purchase. The two ablest speeches in favour of the bill were those by Lord Sandhurst and by Lord Derby, who alone of the Tory peers of note approved of the ministerial scheme. On a division the peers resolved not to allow the bill to pass the second reading, until they had before them a comprehensive plan, by a majority of twenty-five.

And now it was that Mr. Gladstone adopted a course which was the sensation of the session, and proved, what political history has always taught, that the Liberal party, when it suits their purpose, are as eager to claim the protection of the prerogative as they are on other occasions to denounce it. So zealous was Mr. Gladstone now in the cause of prerogative that, like most converts, he overdid his part, and was content to unduly magnify the power of the crown in order to gain his ends. He declared that since the system of purchase was only rendered legal by royal warrant, the government had advised Her Majesty to take the decisive step of cancelling the royal warrant under which purchase was legal. That advice had been accepted and acted on by the queen; a new warrant had been framed in terms conformable with the law, and consequently purchase in the army no longer existed. Such an announcement created the wildest excitement, and was regarded as the most outrageous interference with the rights of the constitution that had occurred during the last century. Mr. Disraeli was the first to rise, and to pass his opinion on this government by *coup d'état*. He wished to know (July 20, 1871) why, if Mr. Gladstone was justified in adopting that high-handed course, he had not at once so dealt with the question? Why had he not saved that paralysis of parliament during the last six months,

which had been mainly caused by appealing to the House of Commons to pass the army regulation bill? Numerous measures called for by the country had been delayed, owing to the discussion that had arisen on that bill; and yet the House was calmly informed that there had been no necessity for such debate, and that the whole question could have been simply settled by the action of the royal warrant! "I am not here," said Mr. Disraeli severely, "to dispute the prerogative of the crown; but that is a very delicate subject, and I very much doubt the wisdom of the minister who attempts to cut the Gordian knots which every now and then have to be encountered in dealing with popular assemblies by an appeal to the prerogative of the crown. I hope the prerogatives of the crown may long exist and be long exercised for the advantage of the country, for the maintenance of our liberties, and the general welfare and interest of the community at large. But no minister acts in a wise manner who, on finding himself baffled in passing a measure which he no doubt believes of importance, but which it is impossible, after all that has occurred in this House, can be considered free from something of the passion of politics, comes forward and tells the House that he will defy the opinion of parliament, and appeals to the prerogative of the crown to assist him in the difficulties which he himself has created."

The conduct of the prime minister on this occasion met with almost universal disapproval, and was rightly regarded as "part of an avowed and shameful conspiracy against the undoubted privileges of the other house of parliament." A fierce discussion arose as to the legality of the interference that had been adopted, and the consensus of public opinion was strongly averse to so curt and imperious a proceeding. It was said that the government had been guilty of a grave breach of constitutional usage in having brought army purchase within parliamentary jurisdiction, and when outvoted by the peers

had treated the Upper House with contempt. The course taken by ministers was unprecedented; it was an unreal triumph, which had strained and discredited the constitution of the country. The permission of the sovereign had been obtained on false grounds. It was alleged that when Her Majesty had been advised to issue the royal warrant, she had been expressly told that she was not exercising an act of the prerogative, but of statutory right. Yet the law distinctly showed that the warrant was not a statutory right, but, on the contrary, the issue of it was an act of the highest and most stringent prerogative. Such a flourishing of the prerogative in the face of one of the estates of the realm was not, it was sneered, to be expected from a government that had ostentatiously proclaimed the liberalism of its actions.

Ministers had placed themselves in an awkward position, from which there was no escape. Either they had obtained the permission of the sovereign for the issue of the warrant through misrepresentation, or they had appealed to a mischievous exercise of the prerogative worthy of the days of Laud and Strafford. "The ministers must take their choice between these two alternatives," said Lord Cairns; "either there was no advice whatever tendered to the sovereign as to the character of the warrant, or else the advice tendered was what the government stated in this House to have been tendered—namely, that the sovereign was signing this warrant, not in the exercise of her royal prerogative, but in execution of a power and duty reposed in her by statute. That advice, I maintain, was not warranted by fact; and we have got here what is absolutely without precedent, a government convicted on their own confession of having upon an important crisis, not intentionally, not wilfully, but in sheer and now admitted ignorance, misrepresented to their sovereign the character of the act which she was called upon to perform, and of having advised her that she was merely exercising

a statutory power when in reality she was performing *an act of the most stringent prerogative.*"*

So domineering and so unprecedented was the conduct of the government considered by the peers, that a vote of censure was passed. It was moved by the Duke of Richmond, "that this House, before assenting to the second reading of the Army Regulation Bill, desires to express its opinion that the interposition of the executive during the progress of a measure submitted to parliament by Her Majesty in order to attain by the exercise of the prerogative, and without the aid of parliament, the principal object included in that measure, is calculated to depreciate and neutralize the independent action of the legislature, and is strongly to be condemned." The motion was carried by a majority of eighty. The Peers, having thus delivered themselves of their parliamentary bile, proceeded to consider the clauses of the bill, and passed them without a division.

Whatever opinion be entertained as to the high-handed proceedings adopted by Mr. Gladstone—and few will deny that such proceedings treated the House of Lords cavalierly, and were inconsistent with the action of constitutional government—there can be but little doubt that the abolition of purchase has worked beneficially for the army. It has substituted promotion by merit, instead of promotion by money. Since first commissions can now only be

* The supposed statutory power under which the warrant was issued was 49 Geo. III., c. 126, s. 7. Some years later (May 13, 1879) Mr. Gladstone thus gave his version of this transaction:—"The ground for the exercise of that prerogative was this: It had been brought to the knowledge not only of the government, but of parliament and of the entire community, that there was bound up with the working of the system of purchase a system of flagrant illegality—an illegality in many instances mixed up with personal complications, but at any rate an illegality of the nature and character of which there was not the slightest doubt—an illegality which was imbedded in the system of extra-regimental prices for commissions; and that system was inseparable from the system of purchase. It was to put a stop to an illegality, and for no other purpose, that the prerogative of the crown was exercised." Still, it may be asked, were the system of purchase and the system of over-regulation prices so bound up together that the one could not be settled without attacking the other? and was it absolutely necessary to summon the aid of the royal prerogative to make legal a measure which government had proposed and parliament had rejected?

obtained through the system of competitive examinations, the intellectual tone of the officers now compares favourably with that of other nations, which under the old plan was certainly not the case. The system of selection, though it has occasionally resulted in abuses, has been administered, as a rule, without creating those results which were so gloomily prophesied; and since an educational standard has been adopted instead of a pecuniary one, the social tone of the army has not deteriorated. The anomalies which formerly existed are now things of the past. We no longer see the incompetent man placed in a position of high command because he had the requisite sum at his banker's to advance his interests; the poor but able officer no longer finds his promotion barred by the system of extra-regulation prices; whilst the young man just passed out of Sandhurst has every inducement to look upon the army as a professional career, and not as an idle occupation.

Ireland during the session still continued to absorb much of the attention of the government. In spite of the overthrow of the Irish Church, the provisions of the land law bill, and the clemency extended towards dangerous rebels, Ireland refused to be content or to desist from the dirty work of agitation and conspiracy. The secret societies were as busy as ever inciting the peasantry to commit agrarian outrages, and to enter upon open rebellion against the government. So grave were the disorders that existed in Westmeath and its neighbourhood, that Lord Hartington, the chief secretary for Ireland, had to appeal to the House for a committee to investigate the causes which had led to the reign of terror that there prevailed, and to obtain additional powers for the government. He drew a melancholy picture of the influence which the Riband society exercised, how murders were committed, how landlords were unable to enforce the commonest rights of property, and how farmers were crippled in their efforts to

obtain labour. Yet the government, he said, had not been remiss. The police had been strengthened at the expense of the disaffected districts, detectives had been freely employed, and the gaols were crowded with the prisoners that had been made. But such precautions and the infliction of such punishments had been in vain. So perfect was the organization of the conspiracy, that the Riband leaders could successfully defy the government. He did not ask, continued Lord Hartington, for a committee to provide a remedy, for that was the duty of ministers; but he wanted a committee to be formed so as to secure a thorough investigation of the case, and thus satisfy the House that when the government asked for any further powers their demand would be justified by necessity. There had been a precedent, he argued, for such a request. In 1852 a committee had been constituted, at the instigation of Mr. Napier, to inquire into the state of Armagh, Monaghan, and Louth. He concluded by moving "that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of Westmeath and certain parts adjoining of Meath and King's county; the nature, extent, and effect of a certain unlawful combination and confederacy existing therein; and the best means of suppressing the same."

The opportunity which this appeal to the House offered for an attack upon the government was not lost upon the leader of the Opposition. He was not surprised, said Mr. Disraeli (February 27, 1871), that Lord Hartington should feel some dismay at coming forward to make such a proposition. Considering, he sneered, that two years had passed of constant legislation by a government elected for the purpose of introducing an entirely new system in the administration of Ireland, it must certainly be painful to have to admit that the labours of the last two sessions had been spent in vain. Then as to the committee which was at first to have been a secret committee, but on reflection the idea of secrecy had

been abandoned, he asked, "Have the government well considered the effect of making such an announcement to the world, and expressing an opinion that it was necessary to have a secret committee to consider the condition of a portion of Ireland? Why, the telegraphic cable must have flashed the announcement to America forty-eight hours ago, and what do you think must have been the effect of it on those treasonable confederacies which are always in action—and are at this moment in action, as we know—against the authority of England? What must have been the effect of such an announcement? It must have produced a conviction in their minds that the government found the whole state of society in Ireland undermined, and that the authority of the queen was in imminent danger. To announce forty-eight hours after this that it is not the intention of the government to propose a secret committee, indicates a tone of levity in dealing with a great question which ought not to pass unnoticed.

"Surely a minister who proposes a secret committee on the condition of Ireland, by that proposition alone incurs the gravest responsibility. Now, to-night we find it is not to be a secret committee, and then, to our great surprise, we find that it is also a committee which is not to devise means for remedying the evils complained of. Then what is the committee to do? Observe the description of this district of Ireland, where there are not only these evils, but these spreading evils—observe the description of it given by the minister. It is brief and terse in the extreme. He tells us it is intolerable. He tells us the state of Ireland is intolerable—that the state of a great portion of Ireland is intolerable, and therefore will want inquiry. Well," for the remark was met with cries of No! no! "that the state of a county in Ireland is intolerable. Is it reduced to that? Is a county in a state so intolerable that you must come to a senate to ask for a committee to inquire into it? Can you not get out of the difficulty without coming

to the House of Commons, and asking it to appoint a secret committee to devise means to govern a county?

"Well, sir, secrecy is given up and devising means is given up; so the question is, 'What is this committee to do?' Every impartial member on either side of the House must have felt the difficulty, and asked himself that question. Why, the secretary of the lord lieutenant gave us ample explanations as to the various means by which he might have gained complete information on all points which the government required to guide them in order to meet the evils of this district; and, indeed, under the very Act [Peace Preservation Act] which we passed last year, they have powers—extraordinary powers; so that, for instance, if there is a felony committed in a district, they can summon witnesses before them and examine them, even although such witnesses may not be connected with the felony. Why, what power has a committee of the House of Commons compared with this power? I would impress on the House the inexpediency of assenting to a committee which is to relieve the government from their responsibility as an executive.

"But the noble lord, who says he will never appear in the sheet of a penitent and holding the taper of remorse,* told us to-night that, whatever the original intentions of the government were, it is not their intention now to ask this committee to devise any means to suppress the evils of which they complain, and which they describe as intolerable. I would say myself at once that, so far as I am concerned, I am perfectly prepared to support the government in any demand they may make upon their own responsibility to terminate an evil which they describe, and I believe justly describe, as intolerable. There is no need to enter into an antiquated history

* "I beg to say for myself and for the government, that I do not feel in the least that I appear here in the character of a penitent in a white sheet, or that the proposal which I now make involves any confession of failure on the part of the government."—*Lord Hartington, Feb. 27, 1871.*

of the horrors of Ribandism to induce the House of Commons to come to this conclusion. We know the evil.

"The evil is intolerable and ought to be put down, and we are prepared to support Her Majesty's government if, in the exercise of their constitutional functions, they come forward and propose a measure, instead of asking the House of Commons to enter upon an inquiry into the matter. The matter is urgent, and the business of a committee is necessarily always long. A committee—to do what?—to examine officers of the government, to examine magistrates, to call for information from a miscellaneous multitude of witnesses? Why, a committee of inquiry for such purposes is always in existence. *It is the cabinet of the queen.* They have the best information, and they are selected men, who are supposed to be most competent to decide on that information; and on the results of their deliberations and on their convictions they ought to introduce a measure, and not move for a committee, when the state of an Irish county is intolerable. Let the standing orders be suspended if the case is urgent.

"The noble lord has made some reference, from that richness of precedent with which he has been crammed on this occasion, to what occurred in 1852, and in the midst of the distress of this regenerating government of Ireland, supported by a hundred legions, and elected by an enthusiastic people in order to terminate the grievances of that country and secure its contentment and tranquillity, he must needs dig up our poor weak government of 1852, and say, 'There was Mr. Napier, your attorney-general, he moved for a committee, and you were a member of that cabinet.' *If I had had a majority of one hundred behind my back, I would not have moved for that committee.* I did the best I could, and I passed a good bill by a respectable majority. But was the situation in which I was placed similar to the situation of Her Majesty's present ministers? Look for a moment to

the relations which this government bear to the House of Commons with regard to the administration of Ireland. The right hon. gentleman opposite [Mr. Gladstone] was elected for a specific purpose: he was the minister who alone was capable to cope with these long-enduring and mysterious evils that had tortured and tormented the civilization of England. The right hon. gentleman persuaded the people of England that, with regard to Irish politics, he was in possession of the philosopher's stone. Well, he has been returned to this House with an immense majority, with the object of securing the tranquillity and content of Ireland. Has anything been grudged him? Time, labour, devotion—whatever has been demanded has been accorded, whatever has been proposed has been carried. *Under his influence and at his instance we have legalized confiscation, consecrated sacrilege, condoned high treason; we have destroyed churches, we have shaken property to its foundation, and we have emptied gaols; and now he cannot govern a county without coming to a parliamentary committee!* The right honourable gentleman, after all his heroic exploits, and at the head of his great majority, is making government ridiculous.

"If he persists in this absurd suggestion, I shall leave it to fortune to decide what may be its results. If he will bring forward a measure, an adequate measure, a measure which will meet the evil, he will be supported. The late secretary of the lord lieutenant knows very well what is the measure that will meet the evil, because he plaintively asked the magistrates at Meath what he should propose to help them out of their difficulties; and they met in quarter-sessions, passed a resolution, and told him what was necessary. What the magistrates told the late secretary of the lord lieutenant will be the groundwork, the gist, and the pith of the measure which Her Majesty's government must bring forward. Under certain circumstances they will have to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act; but after the flashy

speeches of the right hon. gentleman opposite upon that subject, we must have a parliamentary committee as a veil in order that he may save his self-love."

An amusing debate ensued, in which Mr. Bernard Osborne and Sir Robert Peel took high honours; but though several of the Liberals disapproved of the action of the government, on a division, the motion for the appointment of a select committee was accepted by a large majority.

During this session one of those occasions arose in which it fell to the lot of the leader of the Opposition to unite in graceful accord with the government. "In turning to domestic affairs," said the queen in the speech from the throne, "I have first to inform you that I have approved of a marriage between my daughter Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne, and I have declared my consent to this union in council." If the nation was not wildly enthusiastic at the idea of this approaching marriage, it expressed no signs either of indifference or of disapproval. The Princess Louise had not come prominently before the country as had her sisters, the Princess Royal and the Princess Alice. But it was known that she was a young lady of considerable talent; and since her future husband gave promise of one day attaining to distinction from his literary powers, his eloquence, and his assiduity, it was hoped that the marriage had in it all the elements of a happiness based on a similarity of tastes. A few persons perhaps regretted that a princess of the blood should marry out of her rank, whilst others again expressed themselves as delighted that her royal highness was not to fall to the lot of a "beggarly German." There was no enthusiasm, yet there was no coldness.

On the occasion of the settlement of the dowry upon the Princess Louise, Mr. Disraeli said a few words. Mr. Gladstone moved a resolution, which was seconded by the leader of the Opposition, granting an annuity of £6000 to her royal highness, to be further supplemented by a

dowry of £30,000. To this arrangement there was but one dissentient voice. Mr. P. A. Taylor, one of those aggressive and one-idea'd Radicals who occasionally irritate the House of Commons, was of opinion that the supplementary grant should come out of the civil list, and that the expenses of our monarchical establishment were far too heavy; the queen, he said, had some £600,000 a year, whilst "the ruler of the great nation across the Atlantic" had but £5000 a year. Mr. Disraeli rose up to answer the shallow and unsound objections of the man who, by a mean and ignorant opposition, sought to obtain mob popularity. "I am not going," he said (February 16, 1871), "to compare the relative position of our own sovereign with that of the sovereign of any other state; but I cannot help noticing one remark the hon. gentleman made. He said it was not with kings or emperors he wished to compare the position of Her Majesty, but that he would rather cross the Atlantic, and make a comparison of Her Majesty's position with that of the sovereign of the United States. I do not think that we ought really on this question to go into a policy of pounds, shillings, and pence; but if these matters are brought under our consideration, it is hardly possible to leave them quite unnoticed. If we cross the Atlantic we should find that the sovereign of the United States—the sovereign people is paid through its representatives in both houses of parliament an annual salary far exceeding that of the solitary sovereign of this country."

Having thus disproved the assertion so often made that the republican form of government across the Atlantic is cheaper than our own system of constitutional monarchy, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to discuss the question at issue. The case was really very simple. He had never expressed his approval of the principle on which the civil list was founded. It was founded on an old traditional feeling, that the country ought to guard against the crown being in possession of property to

an amount that might be dangerous to the liberties of the people. Now, as the income of the sovereign was less than that of several of her subjects, it was too absurd to legislate any longer upon those old political superstitions. In his opinion, it would have been much better originally if the government of Lord Melbourne, when the settlement of the civil list was fixed upon, had proposed that the crown estates should be intrusted to the sovereign. Those estates were sufficient for the personal comfort and dignity of the crown, and they might have been enjoyed by the crown with the same powers and conditions as apply to all other estates in the country, and which would have allowed the younger children to be amply supported. Had that been done appeals like the one then before the House would need never to have been made, and misrepresentations as to the position of the crown would never have circulated in the country. The duty of the House, however, was to act according to the spirit of the agreement that was entered into with Her Majesty in 1837, and support the crown in its becoming comfort and dignity.

In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli touched upon the nature of the marriage of the princess, and upon the remark of Mr. Taylor that, since the princess was about to ally herself with a subject, she had forfeited her claim to the grant. "It must have been clear," continued the leader of the Opposition, "for a considerable time, to any one who gives any attention to these matters, that a great change was inevitable in the domestic relations between the crown and its subjects. For a considerable period the area out of which consorts for members of the royal family could be selected has been artificially diminished. By the constitution of the country no prince of the Latin race could intermarry with one of our royal house. It was quite clear when the revolution commenced in Germany, and the mediatizing of so many reigning houses in that country occurred—when many of the reigning houses of Germany who pro-

fessed the Protestant faith disappeared—that a considerable change was at hand. To me, under these circumstances, the fact of a princess of our royal house marrying one of Her Majesty's subjects is really as wise as it is romantic. That the hon. gentleman [Mr. Taylor], who professes to be a great propagator of democratic principles, should make such a circumstance the ground-work of an argument against the proposition of Her Majesty's government appears to me surprising. I confess I have another reason in support of this proposition, totally irrespective of that feeling of loyalty which I am sure is shared by hon. members on both sides of the House, and even by the hon. gentleman who has just addressed us. I confess I feel some satisfaction—even, I will say, exultation—that for the first time a princess of the royal house of England is to be married to a member of the House of Commons. I have such affection for this House that I confess I am not insensible to this honour. Our brother member [the Marquis of Lorne] certainly has not been very long among us; but I believe I may say, without using any words but those of truth, he has gained our sympathies by his intelligence and by his breeding. The House of Commons will, I think, seize a very unfavourable opportunity if this were the first occasion on which it could successfully oppose such a grant as that which the right hon. gentleman has offered to our consideration."

The vote was then agreed to, Mr. Taylor appearing as the sole representative of the opposition.

A similar discussion arose on the motion for an annuity to be granted to Prince Arthur. Mr. P. A. Taylor, of course, objected; but on this occasion he was to a certain extent supported by Mr. Dixon, one of the members for Birmingham. Mr. Dixon proposed that the annuity should be reduced from £15,000 to £10,000, giving as his reasons for the reduction that there was among the working classes a large amount of republicanism; that there was

a feeling abroad that republican institutions were less costly than monarchy, with its excrescences flourishing around a throne; and that "the working classes were not children in the art of government, and would not long continue to support pomp and luxury at one end of society, while at the other there are millions of hard-working men engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand struggle with pauperism." Mr. Disraeli opposed the amendment, on the grounds that he had brought forward when the question of the settlement of the Princess Louise was under discussion. As to the remark of Mr. Dixon upon the connection between poverty and the working men, he made a few observations worth remembering.

"The hon. gentleman, the member for Birmingham," he said (July 31, 1871), "talks of the working classes, and talks of them as if they were paupers. Now I must say on the part of the working classes, on whom he says I have had the honour of conferring the franchise, that I protest against that description. The working classes are not paupers; on the contrary, *they are a very wealthy class—they are the wealthiest in the country.* Their aggregate income is certainly greater than any other class; their accumulations are to be counted by millions; and I am not speaking merely of the deposits in savings banks, but of funds of which I am aware they are in possession, and which are accumulated to meet their trade necessities and to defend their labour and rights, which can also be counted by millions; and therefore I protest against that language which would hold out to foreign countries, who would listen to the eloquence that evening of the hon. member, that the great body of the working classes in this country are in a state of pauperism." Then, as to the comparative cost of republicanism and monarchical institutions, Mr. Disraeli repeated what he had before said, that the comparison was not in favour of the former. "So far as I can form an opinion upon it, the cost of republican government is much

more considerable than that of our monarchical government. Though you generally pay the principal personage in the republic only a few thousands a year, yet if you pay all the members of congress, all the counsellors who add the weight of their advice, like the hon. member for Birmingham, not exactly at the same rate, but at a relative rate, I think you will find the aggregate much more considerable than the cost of monarchy to this country, even *if you forget that we have taken from Her Majesty the possession and enjoyment of her real estate.*"

Of the various stormy scenes which the imperious proceedings of Mr. Gladstone occasioned during this session, none were more tempestuous than those which broke out upon the discussion as to the adoption of vote by ballot. Ever since the days of Addison the question of the ballot had been frequently brought before the notice of the House of Commons. For years it had been the subject of annual motions; it had been the one point to which the Chartists had attached the greatest importance; it had been the loudest of all the cries which the advanced section of the Liberal party had raised, and it had ever met with the united and vehement opposition of the Conservatives. On the one side it was said that the vote by ballot would remove from men the temptation either to bribe or intimidate, that it would cause elections to be conducted in an easier and more orderly manner, and that it would do away with all that system of terrorism by which, when openly giving his vote, the tenant feared his landlord, the workman his employer, and the tradesman his customer. On the other hand, it was advanced that the franchise was not a right, but a trust, and therefore should be discharged in public, so that all might see that the voter was acting fairly; that secret voting would give rise to numerous abuses; that it was unmanly to conceal one's opinions, and was "un-English"—the last objection being in the eyes of many unanswerable, and

in itself quite sufficient to condemn the innovation.

For some forty years Mr. Gladstone had been an open and consistent opponent of the ballot; but the evidence taken on the elections of the year 1868 before a committee of the House of Commons, had convinced him that he had entertained a wrong view of the question, and that it was useless any longer to delay legislation on the subject. The tendency of the late reform bill had also helped to strengthen him in his change of opinion. The suffrage was no longer a trust, but a right placed in the hands of all. "The position of the question," he said, "has been very largely altered by the extension of the constituency. Let us consider what that extension is; it is an extension nominally from a £10 suffrage to household suffrage; but really, virtually and in principle, an extension that is unlimited. When we have adopted household suffrage, we have, I think, practically adopted the principle that every man who is not disabled in point of age, of crime, of poverty, or through some other positive disqualification, is politically competent to exercise the franchise." The principle of open voting was, therefore, to be deserted by him, as the principle of the union between church and state in Ireland had been deserted.

The task was intrusted to Mr. Forster, and before Easter the ballot bill was, by arrangement, read a second time without a division. The object of the measure was clearly put before the country. The bill was to apply to municipal as well as parliamentary elections. No paper except the official paper was to be used; in other words, the object of the ballot was not to be defeated by the use of a somewhat similar paper which would enable it to be ascertained how the vote had been given. The voting paper was not to be presented to the voter until he entered the voting booth. The voter was not to be permitted to put any mark upon the voting paper except that which was necessary to show for whom

the vote was given. When a voting paper had once been put in the box, the box was not to be opened except under such precautions as should secure the inviolability of the vote. The same penalties should be attached to personation as were attached to bribery and treating; the candidate should lose his seat through procuring, or attempting to procure, personation. The old plan of nominating candidates and making the final declaration of the poll was abolished.

Such were the chief clauses in the bill, and they encountered much opposition, not only from the Conservative and independent members of the House, but also from several of the Liberal party who were hostile to the ballot. The tactics which recent events have made too familiar to us were freely employed. The bill was to be talked out; amendment after amendment was proposed, and speech after speech delivered, until it seemed hopeless that the bill would ever get through committee. Mr. Gladstone now proposed to his followers that, since it took two parties to create a dispute, the Liberals should not answer the Conservatives, and leave the Opposition to tire themselves out. So faithfully was his advice accepted that on the occasion of Mr. Newdegate rising to conclude a speech, the Liberal party gradually quitted the chamber until the benches on their side of the House were tenanted by two or three ministers and a few private members. This conduct was repeated, but the Opposition were not to be silenced; and during the next five weeks Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Lowther, and others rose up constantly to attack the government, while Mr. Forster, whose patience was admirable, was left to carry on a single-handed defence.

The introduction of the ballot was stanchly opposed by Mr. Disraeli. He denied that the country wanted the measure, and regretted that it had been brought forward to the exclusion of other legislative acts which were urgently needed. He showed that opposition to the ballot was no new-fangled Tory doctrine, but that it

had been disapproved of centuries ago by the very men who were then fighting the prerogative for the liberties of England. In the most memorable parliament that ever sat in England, the Long Parliament, it was proposed, he said (June 29, 1871), that members should be elected by the ballot-box, but that proposition was negatived by a considerable majority. Every one would agree that the members of the Long Parliament were as a body devoted to public liberty, yet in the opinion of that assembly the ballot did not possess advantages which rendered its adoption advisable. The Long Parliament—and those who took part in the debate were levellers, antinomians, and fifth monarchy men—came to the conclusion that the franchise was a great political privilege granted to the elector by the commonwealth for the common good, and that there was no security for its full enjoyment and exercise except publicity.*

"They wished the franchise therefore," said Mr. Disraeli, comparing the reasons why the Commonwealth rejected voting by ballot with the reasons why the nineteenth century Liberal party advocated it—"They wished it therefore to be exercised not to satisfy the self-complacency of the individual, but with a due respect for common sense and the public opinion of the country, and influenced by all those doctrines and all that discipline of party which they believed to be one of the best securities for public liberty. The men of that time were devoted to principles of democracy, but they had the advantage of being acquainted with its errors, and even with its excesses. But they felt there was in the great principle of government they upheld—the democratic principle—something which in their eyes excused many errors and palliated many excesses; and that was the public spirit it created in a community, and without which it believed that no community could prosper. But what is now the system we are recommended to adopt? We announce ourselves

as trembling at the accession of democracy. It is from our fears of democracy that we are recommending this new policy. Yet we are professing a plan which allows democracy to commit all the errors which the Long Parliament was aware of, and all the excesses which were practised by them at the very time they conducted this debate; and we are taking steps to destroy the very principle which in their view compensated for these errors and excesses, and was the best security for public liberty."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to show how false were the objections against open voting. At first the cry had been raised that the tenant had been coerced by his landlord; and when that had been proved a complete delusion, it began to be asserted that it was the manufacturer who was the stern oppressor of those he employed. "The scene is changed," laughed the speaker; "it is not the landlord who tyrannizes over his tenant any longer; it is our own friend the manufacturer—that mild and prosperous, truly liberal and enlightened man, who was always voting for the reduction of the county franchise. He is brought forward to us now as the oppressor of those whom he employs, and it is to guard against his influence—his injurious and perhaps unprincipled influence—that we must entertain the ballot." But was that the truth? No important class in the country called out for the ballot. In the rural districts they did not want it. The employer of labour in towns, the foreman and the mechanic, were all quite strong enough to take care of themselves; the great centres of industry in the towns were too independent to trouble themselves about the ballot. The only persons anxious for it were the petty shopkeepers. "There is a class," continued Mr. Disraeli, "who always want the ballot, and that is the small tradesmen in the towns. It is a respectable class—a class of many virtues; but I do not think it is a class that ought to give a tone to the political life of the country. I say this the more because it has always appeared

* See Journals of the House of Commons for the year 1650.

to me, that the desire of the ballot by the class of small tradesmen is founded upon a perverse and even morbid sentiment. No trade has so great vicissitudes as the retail trade; the retail trader is the victim of the caprice of his customers; he is subject to the adroit competition of unscrupulous rivals, and sometimes he is assailed by the emulation of co-operative stores. The consequence is that the vicissitudes of the retail trader are very considerable; and when the small tradesman makes up his accounts, and he finds that he has lost a customer here and a customer there, the way in which he accounts for it is not by considering the caprice of human nature, or the skilful competition of his rival, but by remembering some promise which he made, and which he did not fulfil at the last general election. It is a mania, a weakness which pervades the class; they really believe that Mr. Blank and Lady Dash have withdrawn their custom because a year ago they gave an ambiguous answer to an appeal; while the persons themselves no doubt have entirely forgotten the incident, have withdrawn their custom for an entirely different reason, and are probably dealing with a tradesman of entirely different opinions from themselves. So much for intimidation."

Nor, he passed on to say, was the ground that open voting encouraged bribery less fallacious. Bribery was less prevalent than it was ten years ago; but to check it they must look to elevating the tone of public morality, and not to legislation. He feared, however, it would always in a measure exist. Political bribery was a fitful quality in England; it came periodically and at particular times in the history of the country. Whenever a very powerful and wealthy class arose in England—and in a country of great commercial energy rich classes would periodically appear—nothing could prevent it asserting a claim to the possession of political power; and whenever a new class of that kind arose bribery would always be rife when an election was held. "It was

so," he said, "in the time of Sir Robert Walpole, when there were the Turkey merchants, men who had made great fortunes; they attacked all the boroughs, and turned the country gentlemen out. Then followed the nabobs—men who had made great fortunes in India; and after them came the West Indian planters, and in the time of the war the government loan merchants; but I believe that at no period has this country ever been more free in its parliamentary affairs from bribery than it was in the years that immediately preceded the Reform Bill of Lord Grey. It happened to be in a time of tranquillity, when no great changes were occurring, and when no new class was treading upon the heels of those in power, and when the elections of members for this House were purer than usual. It shows that we are not making progress; but that it is a fitful influence in our political life—namely, the employment of corrupt means to obtain a seat in this House. We have had the age of railway directors; we have had the age of the great contractors for public works; and we have had the age of nuggets; and in the experience of gentlemen now sitting in this House, we have had elections which were a disgrace to the country."

Yet, continued Mr. Disraeli, those evils had been much mitigated of late years. The provision of local investigation in the Act of 1868 had dealt a severe blow against bribery. At the last general election, though political passions ran high, there was the most marked diminution in bribery proceedings. The adoption of the ballot would not, however, tend to improve matters. By the substitution of secret for open voting bribery and personation, owing to the difficulties of detection which would then follow, would be largely on the increase. There was no necessity for the change. The franchise was as much a trust as it ever was. The Reform Act of 1867 had *not* introduced a revolutionary element into the constitu-

encies, or caused members to be no longer elected for the House of Commons upon the old principles of the British constitution. There was not a single elector who did not possess more than one qualification before he could exercise the vote. Even the householder of the town had to own a house, to be rated, and to have a very long residence before he could vote. And with regard to the other electors the qualifications were higher and more various. There was not a single voter who was not a qualified voter, and who did not vote, in virtue of a qualification which it was not easy to obtain without a character and without energy. So much for the assertion that since the late reform bill the franchise was no longer a privilege! The introduction of the ballot was only part of a system, the object of which was to oppress and alarm the public mind by constant changes. New systems of government, new principles of property, every subject that could agitate the minds of nations, had been brought forward and patronized until the country, anxious and harassed, knew not what next to expect.

"This arrangement about the ballot," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "is part of the same system, a system which would dislocate all the machinery of the state, and disturb and agitate the public mind. If, therefore, for no other reason, for that alone I shall resist it under every form and in every manner. But I know to-night we may have to encounter an apparent defeat. Yes, there is a mechanical majority, a majority the result of heedlessness of thought on the part of members of parliament, who were so full of the Irish Church, and of questions of economy at the last election, that they gave pledges in favour of the ballot without duly considering the question. There are a great number of gentlemen who when they came into parliament were opposed to the ballot, but who in a conciliatory age like this have put aside their opinions and heedlessly adopted this doctrine. These are the

elements of which this mechanical majority is composed; and however triumphant that majority may be to-night, its triumph will only be for the moment. There is a celebrated river which has been the subject of political interest of late, and with which we are all acquainted, which rolls its magnificent volume clear and pellucid in its course, but which never reaches the ocean; it sinks into mud and morass, and such will be the fate of this mechanical majority. The country is entirely against the proposed change. The conscience of the country is against it. We have had no exhibition out of doors, or any feeling in favour of it. It is an old-fashioned political expedient; it is not adapted to the circumstances which we have to encounter in the present; and because it has no real foundation of truth or policy it will meet with defeat and discomfiture."

In its passage through the House of Commons, the ballot bill, thanks to the "mechanical majority," succeeded in defeating the tactics of the Opposition. Mr. Disraeli spoke more than once against the measure, and invariably regretted its introduction. He complained that important matters—such as the recommendations of the sanitary commissioners, the establishment of a tribunal of ultimate appeal, the administration of the admiralty board, and various financial questions—had been put on one side in order that the ballot bill might be discussed. "Why," he asked, "is all this old stuff brought before us? Only because the prime minister has been suddenly converted to an expiring faith, and has passionately embraced a corpse." Why should they spend nights and mornings upon such "a worn-out antiquated frivolity as secret voting?" No one wanted the bill, no one was anxious for the ballot, the whole thing was simply occupying precious time which might be far better employed.

"This bill," he said in the debate on the third reading (August 8, 1871), "is probably about soon to leave us. I regret its intro-

duction, not merely on the grounds I have referred to, but because generally speaking I think it a retrograde measure. We have been now for nearly fifty years trying to get politics out of holes and corners. We began by getting them out of Old Sarum and Gatton. There was real 'secret voting.' I acknowledge that thirty-five or forty years ago there was a plausible case to be made out for the ballot; and I think the case for the ballot might be strong if the principle be just that the franchise is a trust—a principle in politics which has unfortunately been accepted by this House for a long time, and which those who have been great leaders of opinion have promulgated, but against which I have always protested, because if the elector is a trustee he may fairly say, 'If there is a trust there must be unlimited confidence; you have confided to me this office, and I ask of you, the state, in turn to protect me in its exercise; and I cannot be protected unless I have the advantage of recording my vote without being responsible to anyone; you have chosen me to be your trustee, I demand that I may be allowed completely to fulfil that trust.' But all that is past; it is acknowledged now that the franchise is not a trust, but that it is a political privilege, and like all political privileges it must be exercised for the common good, and cannot be exercised for the common good unless it is exercised publicly. The moment you had a qualified but largely expanded constituency, you altered all the conditions of the case. If you pass this bill you will be taking a retrograde step in divorcing political life from publicity. Without publicity there can be no public spirit, and without public spirit every nation must decay."

The "retrograde step" was deferred for a season. On the bill being sent up to the House of Lords its rejection was moved by Lord Shaftesbury on the plea of the lateness of the session. After a brief debate, in which the Duke of Somerset bitterly attacked the government, the scheme of secret voting was defeated by a majority

of two to one. Indeed, so wide and formidable was the difference of opinion between the peers and the government that only forty-eight peers could be induced to vote for the ballot bill at all, the remainder of the Liberal peers preferring to stay away. Contents, 48; not contents, 97—majority, 49.

Parliament was prorogued August 21, 1871. Of the numerous measures which had been so boastfully announced at the beginning of the session as about to be introduced, but few received the royal assent. Bills had been brought forward and then abandoned; the House had sat far into August and yet little legislative results had been obtained; there had been incessant wrangling between the Treasury bench and the Opposition; and the session closed amid much uneasiness and disapproval. Mr. Gladstone had tried to do too much, and to please everybody, and the consequence was that he had done very little and displeased everybody. It was felt throughout the country that parliament had failed, both in legislation and in its function of supervising administrative business. The budget had been a blunder. The naval and military estimates were heavy, yet the state of the army was not satisfactory, and that of the fleet far from tended to inspire confidence. The abortive licensing bill of Mr. Bruce had irritated the publican interest. The local taxation bill, which was to redress so many grievances, had broken down. The "great unwashed" had been rendered furious by the government first forbidding a "demonstration" to be held, and then countermanding the order; whilst the Irish, on being refused permission to assemble in Phoenix Park to pray for the liberation of the military prisoners confined for Fenianism, loudly complained of the favouritism shown to the English "republican," who was permitted to roar himself hoarse in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park, whilst the Hibernian, when he met to ventilate his grievances, was charged by cavalry and attacked by police. On all

sides there were irritation, discontent, and riot. "It is the most unlucky government that ever was," cried the Duke of Somerset when opposing the ballot bill. "Every day brings some new misfortune to the government. Whether one takes a walk through the parks, through Trafalgar Square, or even along the Thames embankment, everywhere evidence is to be found how the government have mismanaged affairs. What a mess they have made of it in the park here and in the park in Ireland! Their army cannot march, and their ships cannot swim. It is a very unfortunate circumstance that the government should go on blundering in that way."

During the recess ministers amused themselves by touring about the country contradicting all the statements of their enemies, vindicating their actions in the past, and, as Mr. Disraeli said, living in "a blaze of apology." In spite of all their eloquence, however, the country declined to come to any other conclusion than that arrived at by the Duke of Somerset, that the government had "made a mess of it." Whilst his rivals were busy excusing the failures of the last session, Mr. Disraeli addressed himself but once to the country. It was on the occasion of the dinner given by the Hughenden Horticultural Society. Her Majesty had for some time past been in failing health, and much anxiety was felt by the better classes in the country about her condition. At the same time it must be admitted that there was a large section of the people who grumbled severely at the secluded life led by the queen, and who asserted, being ignorant of the state of her health, that it was the duty of Her Majesty to come forward from her retirement, and to dispense the hospitalities and fulfil the social obligations expected from the throne. The success which had attended upon the elevation of the French republic had caused a feeling among the more ignorant and easily prejudiced in the country in favour of republican institutions; and it was asked both in ribald verse and still more ribald

caricature what use was there in possessing a social ornament to the constitution if no state balls or concerts were ever given, if all the royal palaces were closed, if levees and drawing-rooms were never held, and if royal and other illustrious personages who visited our shores were received neither at Windsor Castle nor Buckingham Palace, but had to content themselves with the accommodation afforded by an hotel? If the sovereign was too stricken with grief to carry out the duties imposed upon her by her lofty position, let her abdicate and give place to the heir-apparent. Or better still, shrieked the republican division, let monarchy be abolished, and the simple and economical institutions now in vogue both across the Channel and across the Atlantic be adopted.

So sneered and spoke certain among the masses, and their words did not meet with entire disapproval. It was to correct this impression that Mr. Disraeli made a few remarks which created no little sensation at the time. He explained that the sovereign of these realms did not neglect her constitutional duties, and that it was only from ill health that she was debarred from performing her social duties. "The health of the queen," he said, "has for several years been a subject of anxiety to those about her, but it is only this year that the country generally has become acquainted with the gravity of her condition. I believe I may say there is some improvement in Her Majesty's health, but I fear it will be a long time before it will recover the average condition; and I do not think we can conceal from ourselves that a still longer time must elapse before Her Majesty will be able to resume the performance of those public and active duties which it was once her pride and pleasure to fulfil—I say her pleasure to fulfil, because they brought her into constant and immediate contact with her people. The fact is, we cannot conceal from ourselves that Her Majesty is physically and morally incapacitated from performing those duties; but it is some con-

solation to Her Majesty's advisers to know that, with regard to those much higher duties which Her Majesty is called upon to perform, she still performs them with a punctuality and a precision which have certainly never been surpassed, and rarely equalled by any monarch of these realms.

. . . There is not a despatch received from abroad, or sent from this country abroad, which is not submitted to the queen. The whole of the internal administration of this country greatly depends upon the sign manual, and of our present sovereign it may be said that her signature has never been placed to any public document of which she did not know the purpose, and of which she did not approve. Those cabinet councils of which you all hear, and which are necessarily the scene of anxious and important deliberations, are reported and communicated on their termination by the minister to the sovereign, and they often call from her critical remarks requiring considerable attention; and I will venture to say this, that no person likely to administer the affairs of this country would treat the suggestions of Her Majesty with indifference, for at this moment there is probably no person living who has such complete control over the political condition of England as the sovereign herself.

. . . All who have served her will admit that when her ministers have been selected by her, in deference to what she believes to be the higher interests of the state and the opinion of the country, she gives to them a complete confidence and an undeviating support. But although there never was a sovereign who would less arrogate to herself any power or prerogative which the constitution does not authorize, so I will say there was never one more wisely jealous of the prerogatives and privileges which the constitution has allotted to her, because she believes that they are for the welfare of her people."

No sooner had this speech been delivered than attention was at once drawn to the words "physically and morally incapaci-

tated." Mr. Disraeli denied that he had said "morally," and therefore the objection to his observation at once fell to the ground. To be physically incapacitated is one thing, to be morally, is a very different matter. Still, in spite of the denial, the subject was not permitted for some time to drop. It suited the malice of certain political opponents to decry Mr. Disraeli, and to make out that the man who was, of all English prime ministers, the most jealous of any tampering with the prerogative, was attempting to bid for republican support by directing a "pointed and precise" attack against the sovereign, in order to tarnish the lustre of the crown.

Before the year closed republicanism in England, however, received a blow which at once crushed its rising efforts. The Prince of Wales, on returning from a visit to the seat of Lord Londesborough, had been attacked by typhoid symptoms, and was lying dangerously ill at Sandringham. When the sad news was made public, the most ardent loyalty was restored to the nation. All the ribald caricatures, all the lying stories which had been so freely circulated, all the sham hostility which had been directed against the throne, at once disappeared and were forgotten. There was only one prayer throughout the country—that it might please God to restore the heir-apparent to perfect health, and thus create rejoicing in every heart. The interest in all other topics died away—for the one question of the hour, to which alone the nation cared for a reply, was "How is the prince?" As the bulletins were issued they were perused by an eager and anxious crowd, and their contents flashed forth to every town and village in the kingdom. All Europe looked on with astonishment and with reverence. At a time when republicanism was supposed to be in the ascendant, this devotion to the cause of monarchical government, this unfeigned attachment to the royal family, and the sincerity of the grief which the illness of the heir-apparent excited amid all classes

of the nation, caused men, who had taught that the influence of a crown was a delusion and a throne a symbol of oppression, to re-consider their opinions, and to admit that in England, at least, the principle of royalty was as firmly settled in the hearts of the people as it was honoured and beloved. Happily, as we know, the prince slowly but steadily recovered, and was shortly afterwards enabled to receive from his future subjects such an ovation as seldom falls to the lot of man. His illness cannot be said to have been sent in vain, since it effectually dispelled the clouds of calumny and disloyalty which had for some little time past been gathering around the throne.

The queen, ever sensitive of the attachment of her people, did not permit the loyal sympathy which had been called forth to pass unacknowledged. She thus testified her thanks:—

“WINDSOR CASTLE, Dec. 26, 1871.

“The queen is very anxious to express her deep sense of the touching sympathy of the whole nation on the occasion of the alarming illness of her dear son, the Prince of Wales. The universal feeling shown for her by her people during those painful, terrible days, and the sympathy evinced by them with herself and her beloved daughter, the Princess of Wales, as well as the general joy at the improvement in the Prince of Wales’ state, have made a deep and lasting impression on her heart, which can never be effaced. It was indeed nothing new to her, for the queen had met with the same sympathy when, just ten years ago, a similar illness removed from her side the mainstay of her life, the best, wisest, and kindest of husbands.

“The queen wishes to express, at the same time, on the part of the Princess of Wales, her feelings of heartfelt gratitude, for she has been as deeply touched as the queen by the great and universal manifestation of loyalty and sympathy.

“The queen cannot conclude without expressing her hope, that her faithful subjects will continue their prayers to God for the complete recovery of her dear son to health and strength.”

CHAPTER VIII.

"CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES."

THE shadows which coming events cast before them were deepening and lengthening. The disintegrating influences which a few months later were to shatter and overthrow the Gladstone administration were making themselves palpably felt, and were full of ill omen to all who had the interests of the Liberal party really at heart. It was evident that on the various questions which had arisen there was so much diversity of opinion as to render it hopeless to expect that union could long prevail, and ministerialists present an unbroken front to the attacks of a patient, but vigilant Opposition. As he critically examined his followers before preparing for action, Mr. Gladstone saw the elements of discord in every section, and that mutiny was only watching its opportunity to sound the cry of disaffection. The clergy were fast deserting from his ranks, since they never knew from one session to another whether it was to fall to their lot to share the same fate as that of their brethren of the sister Church in Ireland. The Nonconformists were agitating violently against certain provisions in the education bill, and threatened, unless their demands were complied with, to withdraw altogether their allegiance from the ministry. Several of the Liberal landed gentry were rendered hostile by the clauses of the Irish land bill, fearing that such a measure would eventually lead to a reduction of rent in England, and to a change for the worse in the relations between landlord and tenant. In commercial circles the "sweet simplicity" of the "harum scarum" budgets of Mr. Lowe were adversely commented upon in every bank parlour and almost every counting-house. The loss of the *Captain* and of the

Megara had shaken the confidence of the nation in the administration of naval affairs. The abolition of the purchase system, though the reform was to be commended, had caused the army to look upon the government as an aggressive and meddlesome foe. The licensed victuallers, irritated at the interference with the licensing question, were preparing to go over in a body to the Opposition. The American claims, which had meekly been admitted by ministers, had angered and humiliated the country, which very justly felt that the authorities at Washington were presuming on our good-nature—or timidity.

Yet, as if this discreditable state of things had not in itself been sufficient to make the nation sullen and depressed, Mr. Gladstone must needs go out of his way to throw more dirt upon his already amply bespattered administration. The appointment of Sir Robert Collier to a seat at the judicial committee of the privy council, was one of those insolent and infamous jobs only to be expected from a government which was ever lauding the lofty morality of its motives and the single-minded character of its political ambition. It was a job worthy of the worst days of Sir Robert Walpole or the Duke of Newcastle, and based on grounds which even the most brazen attorney who had ever saved his client through a flaw in the indictment, or through quibbles of the most shuffling character, would have hesitated to advance. The subtlest and most unscrupulous of the friends of the prime minister felt themselves at a complete loss how to defend and throw a glamour over so strained and arrogant a proceeding. Sir Robert Collier, the attorney-general to the government, had to be pro-

vided for. A vacancy occurring, he had been appointed a judge of the court of Common Pleas for a few days only, in order to qualify him to be a paid member of the judicial committee of the privy council—it having been specially enacted by a statute passed only the last session, that no one could be appointed a member of such judicial committee who was not, or had not been, a judge “of one of Her Majesty’s superior courts at Westminster, or a chief-justice of the high court of judicature at Fort-William in Bengal, or Madras, or Bombay, or of the late supreme court of judicature at Fort-William in Bengal;” the object of this provision being, of course, only to transfer men of trained judicial experience to the committee of the privy council, which was to be the new court of appeal. The vacant appointment had been tendered to three judges, and had been refused, since the salary was not sufficiently tempting; it was then offered to Sir Robert Collier, and accepted. Sir Robert was, as we have said, the attorney-general of the government, a distinguished counsel if you will, but of course possessed of no judicial experience whatever. To qualify him for his new duties, it was necessary to adopt a course which even the typical jesuit would have thought a little too shifty and evasive. The late attorney-general was accordingly appointed to a vacant puisne judgeship in the court of Common Pleas; and having aired his new wig and robes for a couple of days on the bench, was straightway transferred to the judicial committee of the privy council.

So glaring a setting at nought of the spirit of an act of parliament was a proceeding which did not pass unnoticed or uncondemned. Remonstrances against this colourable and manufactured qualification, which had been deemed sufficient to give an ex-attorney-general a seat in the new court of appeal, poured in upon both Mr. Gladstone and the lord chancellor from Liberals of all shades of opinions. “From every member of the legal profes-

sion,” wrote the Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn, a staunch Liberal, to the prime minister, “with whom I have been brought into contact in the course of the last few days, I have met with but one expression of opinion as to the proposed step—an opinion, to use the mildest term I can select, of strong and unqualified condemnation. Such, I can take upon myself to say, is the unanimous opinion of the profession. I have never in my time known of so strong or universal an expression—I had almost said explosion—of opinion.” Still, in the face of all protest, this evasion of the spirit of the law was carried out, and Sir Robert Collier took his seat at the judicial committee.

This disgraceful act was to be repeated in another instance, which created almost equal scandal. The rectory of Ewelme, ever since the days of James I., had been annexed to the Regius professorship of divinity of the University of Oxford; but during the last session an Act had been passed severing the rectory of Ewelme from the Regius professorship. Still, when this separation took place, it had been specially stipulated that the rectory should never fall into the hands of one who was not a member of the convocation of the University of Oxford. The meaning of this provision was, of course, very simple; it meant that only a man trained and educated at Oxford should enjoy the fruits of the rectory. But Mr. Gladstone proved himself as equal in evading the spirit of the law in this case as he had been in the Collier appointment. The living of Ewelme became void, owing to the promotion of Dr. Payne Smith to the deanery of Canterbury. Mr. Gladstone then presented a Mr. Harvey, a member of the University of Cambridge, to the vacant rectory. And now the same farce was to be gone through as had been acted with such success by the late attorney-general. The spirit of the law was to be evaded, whilst the letter was strictly to be carried out. As Sir Robert Collier had been appointed a judge to qualify himself for a

seat on the judicial committee, so this Mr. Harvey was admitted a member of the convocation of Oxford, and thus rendered fit to enjoy the emoluments of a living which had been intended to be held by a real, and not a nominal son of Oxford, precisely as the seat in the new court of appeal had been intended to be occupied by a real, and not a nominal judge.

To the ordinary mind there can be but one opinion as to these appointments; they were made in open defiance of provisions specially drawn up to avoid such jobbery as had actually occurred. No man whose sense of common honesty is not blinded by party bias, or warped by the delusions of false logic, can fail to see that the appointment of Sir Robert Collier, who was in reality a barrister and not a judge, to the judicial committee of the privy council was contrary to the true interpretation of the act of parliament; and that the appointment of Mr. Harvey, who was a Cambridge man, and not an Oxford man in the true sense implied by the statute, should never have been made. But the mind of Mr. Gladstone is, as we all know, of no ordinary calibre; it is too "pious," too "earnest," too "thorough and intense" to be influenced by those common principles of political honour and morality which usually guide and control the actions of inferior statesmen. It is a mind which, when arraigned at the bar of political criticism, has much to be answerable for. It has suffered its gifted possessor to be, within the space of five decades, the hope of stern, unbending toryism, and afterwards the hope of a loose and flexible republicanism; it has suffered its gifted possessor to be the staunch upholder of the union between church and state, and afterwards the dissolver of such union; to be the opponent of the expenditure of the Crimean war, and yet to hold the seals of office as chancellor of the exchequer in the very administration whose extravagance he condemned; to be the denouncer of the income tax when in opposition, and then to be the first to fall back

upon its convenient aid when in power; to be the opponent of the ballot, and then to be its champion; to be the proclaimer of a policy of non-reduction in Irish rents, and then to be the introducer of the Irish land bill; to be the avenger of "atrocities" when Turkey is the offender, but to be silent when Poles and Jews are the victims of Russian brutality and intolerance; to solemnly affirm in the House of Commons, on the occasion of Sir Robert Peel's amendment to the resolution moved by the Whig ministry in 1839, that "It is not fitting that this House should adopt a proceeding which has the appearance of calling in question the undoubted right of the House of Lords to inquire into the state of Ireland," and to dispute that right in 1882; in short to be the advocate of one class of measures one session and the opponent the next. It is not therefore, perhaps, a matter of much surprise that a mind so "pious" and "earnest," or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, a mind so vacillating and elastic, should have found nothing deserving of reproach in such evasions as were necessary to establish the appointments of Sir Robert Collier and the Rev. William Wigan Harvey. It is pleasant to think that throughout the long political career of Lord Beaconsfield, the great Conservative chief was never under the influence of idiosyncracies which impelled him to commit acts which might be branded in terms so harsh and plain as scarcely to be permissible even in that veiled form which is called "a parliamentary sense."

The Houses re-assembled February 6, 1872. In the speech from the throne mention was made of the happy recovery from his recent illness of the Prince of Wales, of the intended settlement of the *Alabama* claims by arbitration at Geneva, of the question of the San Juan water boundary, and of the bills for the improvement of public education in Scotland, for the amendment of the licensing system, the regulation of mines, and the establishment of secret voting. It was also said

that Ireland was "free from serious crime," and that several measures of administrative improvement for Ireland would be introduced. After the mover and seconder of the address had delivered themselves of their elaborate opinions and studied comments, Mr. Disraeli reviewed in a somewhat lengthy speech the political situation. He began by humorously protesting against ministers during the recess going about the country to vindicate their conduct, and living "in a blaze of apology." If their conduct required vindication the House of Commons, he hinted, was the proper place to make their apologies; so that after the rest of the recess they might return fresh to their work, as was the fashion in the good old parliamentary days. He then passed on to repeat his objections to the ballot bill, which he regretted was to be again introduced to the exclusion of measures—especially sanitary measures—that were really needed. There was no occasion for such an Act. Secret voting, it had been said, was the practice of all free states; yet it was well known that neither in the United States, with one exception, nor in Australia, with the exception of South Australia, was the voting secret. Nor was it true that the ballot bill was inevitable because every man in England now had a vote. Every man in England did *not* have a vote, since according to the census returns only one person in fifteen enjoyed the privilege of voting.

"I for my part," Mr. Disraeli said, "much regret that the government press on the measure; and I shall offer to the principle of the bill an unceasing and unflinching opposition. We have now for long generations been building up in this country a great fabric of political freedom, and we have founded that fabric upon publicity. That has been the principle of the whole of our policy. First of all, we made our courts of law public; and during the last forty years we have completely emancipated the periodical press of Eng-

land, which was not literally free before, giving it such power that it throws light upon the life of almost every class in this country, and I might say upon the life of almost every individual. It seems to me, therefore, most inconsistent that in deference to a now obsolete prejudice—for such I will venture to call it—we should deviate from that principle of publicity, and throw a veil of secrecy over the conduct of the most important body in this country—the constituent body, a body which I maintain is as independent as it is powerful." With a numerous and powerful constituency acts of oppression, he declared, could not now to any great extent be exercised; and since local investigation by the judges of the land had been established, bribery had much diminished. He did not expect to be successful in obtaining a majority against the bill; still the measure would throughout its progress in the House meet with his strenuous and consistent opposition.

The claims of America, as interpreted by the treaty of Washington, next came within the criticism of Mr. Disraeli. A few words as to this treaty, which was characterized throughout its proceedings by the meekness and indecision peculiar to a Liberal foreign policy. The raids which the *Alabama* and other privateers escaping from our ports had made upon American property, during the late war between the North and the South, had caused much indignation in the United States. Diplomacy had for some time past been endeavouring to settle the claims which America had advanced. That the *Alabama* and the other privateers had been guilty of offences demanding redress was admitted both by the Liberals and the Conservatives; and when the latter were in power Lord Stanley, as foreign secretary, had endeavoured to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the question, but without success, owing to the additional demands then brought forward by America. There was no dispute as to the *Alabama* grievances; but mixed up with those grievances

were a mass of indirect exactions which could not be admitted by England. Mr. Reverdy Johnson had crossed the Atlantic to arrange these indirect claims and the other points that were under investigation; but being a man of a kindly and susceptible nature, he was so overcome with the hospitalities and social attentions he received, that he consented to the drawing up of a treaty which by his own countrymen was considered far too favourable to English interests. The treaty was rejected by the United States, and Mr. Reverdy Johnson was recalled.

His successor was Mr. Motley, the historian, and the interrupted negotiations were at once resumed. It was agreed, since all questions had to be referred to the senate of the United States, that a conference should take place at Washington, attended both by commissioners from the United States and from England; and that the matters in dispute should be settled on principles so broad and comprehensive as to serve as precedents on future occasions. The following rules were laid down for the guidance of the commissioners:—

"1. That a neutral government is bound, first, to use due diligence to prevent the fitting out, arming, or equipping within its jurisdiction of any vessel which it has reasonable ground to believe is intended to cruise or carry on war against a power with which it is at peace; and also to use like diligence to prevent the departure from its jurisdiction of any vessel intended to cruise or carry on war as above, such vessel having been specially adapted in whole or in part, within such jurisdiction, to warlike use.

"2. Not to permit or suffer either belligerent to make use of its ports or waters as the base of naval operations against the other, or for the purpose of the renewal or augmentation of military supplies or arms, or the recruitment of men.

"3. To exercise due diligence in its own ports and waters, and as to all persons within its jurisdiction, to prevent any violation of the foregoing obligations and duties.

"It being a condition of this understanding, that these obligations should in future be held to be binding internationally between the two countries."

According to these rules the treaty of Washington was drawn up, and it was

hoped that the preliminary difficulties had been settled. The English commissioners had consented, with a deference which created some hostile comments at home, to the demands of the United States, when a new difficulty now appeared. It had been agreed that the points contested should be decided by arbitration; but on the framing of the treaty the English commissioners had made their American colleagues clearly to understand that the only matters to be considered by the arbitrators were the direct ravages committed by the *Alabama* and the other privateers, whose depredations had occasioned the treaty. The United States, however, now brought forward a series of indirect claims "growing out of the acts of certain vessels, in respect of which the government of the United States alleges that Great Britain has failed to perform some international duty." These indirect claims may be thus summarized:—

1. The losses occasioned by the transfer of the American shipping trade to the British flag.

2. The considerable expenses imposed on the United States by the necessity of chasing the privateers.

3. The losses from the increase of insurance premiums.

4. The enlarged war expenditure caused by the prolongation of hostilities.

After much discussion these indirect claims were virtually waived by the government of the United States; but at the time when Mr. Disraeli alluded to our relations with America, in his comment upon the speech from the throne, they were still being brought forward for settlement. These diplomatic proceedings Mr. Disraeli now passed under review. "Ever since I have sat in this House," he said, "I have always endeavoured to maintain and cherish relations of cordiality and confidence between the United Kingdom and the United States. I have felt that between those two great countries the material interests were so vast, were likely so greatly to increase, and were in their character so mutually beneficial to both

countries, that they alone formed bonds of union between them upon which public men might count with confidence. But I could not forget that in the relations between the United States and England there was an element also of sentiment, which ought never to be despised in politics, and without which there cannot be enduring alliance. When the unhappy civil war occurred, I endeavoured therefore as far as I could to maintain in this House a strict neutrality between the northern and southern states. There were no doubt great differences of opinion, as must occur in events so momentous. Those differences of opinion were shared by hon. members on both sides of the House; but as regards the House of Commons, it is a fact that throughout that great struggle there was never a party fight of any kind in this House upon the subject. There were some at a particular time—for a long time during that contest—who were anxious to obtain the recognition of the southern states by this country. I never could share that opinion; and I am bound to say that my friend the late Lord Derby, with whom I acted whether in government or in opposition in perfect accord, was equally opposed to that policy, as was his son the present Earl of Derby. We were of opinion that, had that recognition occurred, it would not have averted the final catastrophe; nay, it would not have procrastinated it, and it would at the same time have necessarily involved this country in a war with the northern states, while there were circumstances then existing in Europe which made us believe that the war might not have been limited to America."

Holding those views, and professing that friendship, continued Mr. Disraeli, he wished to regard all proceedings touching the welfare of the United States in an amicable light. When in office he had been the first to propose that the *Alabama* claims should be referred to arbitration. "That act on our part," he remarked, "proved the sincerity of our opinions, and

I do not for a moment doubt, and have not for a moment doubted, the wisdom of that policy which recommended the settlement of those claims by arbitration." The treaty, however, negotiated by Lord Derby had been rejected by the United States because it *expressly shut the government of Washington from preferring under its provisions those very indirect claims about which there had been so much dispute*. Those "wild and preposterous" claims, Mr. Disraeli asserted, could not for one moment be seriously considered. He did not oppose the treaty of Washington that had been entered into, though he objected to several of its clauses; but both he and his followers had thought it unwise to challenge it in parliament, partly because it had been held by high authority to be legally complete when it was signed. Still there must be no two opinions as to the meaning of that treaty. According to ministers the treaty excluded the indirect claims; but the United States appeared, from recent correspondence, to be under the impression that the treaty admitted the consideration of those claims. There must be, he warned, no confusion of ideas; no floundering in "a Serbonian bog of diplomacy;" it was the duty of the government to speak out clearly and frankly.

"It is a question," said Mr. Disraeli, amid the cheers of the House, "that ought to be met with entire frankness and friendship. Her Majesty's government should say—'We have signed this treaty, and we have our interpretation of it; you have, much to our astonishment, placed upon it an interpretation perfectly different. It is impossible for us to consent to conditions which the honour of this country forbids, which the ordinary calculations of prudence that should govern and regulate the proceedings of all states condemn, which are too monstrous to enter into the heads of any practical and responsible statesmen. And as it is impossible for us to accept your interpretation, we ask you whether you will not on reflection

believe that ours is the just and true interpretation, and if you do come to that conclusion we are prepared to adhere to every letter of our engagements; but if you will not do this, then we ask you to cancel with no ill-feeling a document which was intended to conciliate and cement the feelings of friendship between two great countries, but which has unfortunately led to results so opposite and so mischievous.”

Mr. Disraeli then concluded with a graceful allusion to the recovery of the Prince of Wales, and to the joy with which that event had been hailed by the nation. “The unexpected and startling events,” he said, “connected with the illness of the Prince of Wales have evoked and manifested the deep loyalty of this country and the personal affection which is felt by the people towards the prince. After all his sufferings, it must be an ennobling solace to him to feel that he possesses the affection of his fellow-countrymen. And we in this House—of whom there is probably not one who is not personally acquainted with the prince—know that he is entirely deserving of their confidence and their affection.” Mr. Gladstone in reply contended that the treaty could not be read in two contradictory senses, and therefore needed no further elucidation; he admitted that Mr. Disraeli had always treated American affairs with the judgment and discretion of an enlightened patriot; and he concluded by asserting that the indirect claims could not be considered by any nation possessing a spark of honour or spirit. The motion for an address to the crown in answer to the speech was then agreed to, and the debate came to an end.

One of the first subjects which engaged the attention of the re-assembled House of Commons was the election of a speaker. Mr. John Evelyn Denison, after filling the chair with the unanimous approval of the House during the last fifteen years, had earned his well-deserved repose, and had been raised to the peerage as Viscount

Ossington.* He had entered parliament as a warm supporter of Mr. Canning, and had held office under that brilliant genius as one of the Lords of the Admiralty. Though Mr. Denison had never taken an active part in politics, his name will best be remembered as a social reformer from the Act which bore his name.† His graceful dignity, his knowledge of the rules of the House, his exquisite impartiality, and a temper which, though never ruffled, could never be taken advantage of, caused him to be one of the most able as well as the most popular speakers that had ever occupied the chair. A vote of thanks was eloquently proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and seconded by Mr. Disraeli.

“You, sir,” said the leader of the Opposition, addressing Mr. Denison for the last time in his capacity as the arbiter of debate, “have brought to that chair parliamentary learning, varied accomplishment, and especially that refined taste and that high breeding which, whatever may happen to us, I trust will ever be the characteristics of the House of Commons. As to that spirit of impartiality, so important in the position which you occupy, I should not be doing justice to my own feelings—and what is much more important, I should not be doing justice to the cause of political truth—were I not to bear witness that, although we belong to different political connections, during the long period that you have filled that chair no cloud ever rose between us. And when,

* By constitutional usage it is customary in the case of a speaker of the House of Commons, on his final retirement from the chair, to address the crown to confer upon him “some signal mark of royal favour.” This request is responded to on the part of the sovereign by the elevation of the retiring speaker to the peerage, and by a message to the House of Commons recommending that pecuniary provision be made for the support of the dignity. Every speaker during the present century has been raised to the peerage. Mr. Addington was created Viscount Sidmouth; Sir John Mitford, Baron Redesdale; Mr. Abbot, Baron Colchester; Sir Charles Mannors-Sutton, Viscount Canterbury; Mr. James Abercromby, Baron Dunfermline; Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Viscount Eversley; and Mr. Denison, Viscount Ossington.

† By the Denison Act guardians were prohibited from making the education of the children of paupers a condition of out-door relief.

sir, during that period I was called on to discharge the principal business in this House, I am sure I should not have been equal to the occasion, or obtained from the House its generous and indulgent acceptance of my efforts, had I not been sustained by the valuable and vigilant aid which you afforded to me, and which was absolutely inestimable. I trust that in the comparative retirement which awaits you your health will be restored, and that you will be enabled to resume in the service of the country the exercise of those talents which we so highly appreciate. In another house of parliament I am sure you will not forget that in which have been passed more than two-thirds of your life, and in which you have obtained such eminent distinction. I am sure also I am not misinterpreting the sentiments of all who are present, when I say that your authority here will never be appealed to but with reverence and respect, and your name never mentioned but with esteem and affection." The chair thus vacated was then filled by Mr. Henry William Bouverie Brand, the present speaker, who had long served as "whip" to the Liberal party.

Acting in accordance with the duties of a leader of the Opposition as laid down by him when replying to Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Disraeli was content with a general supervision of matters, and left the details of debate, especially during the weeks which preceded Easter, to his colleagues. He took no part in repelling the ill-conditioned attack upon the expenditure of the civil list revenues made by Sir Charles Dilke; he allowed the vote of censure upon the government in consequence of the Collier and Ewelme rectory scandals to be moved without any biting comments issuing from his lips; and he was equally silent upon the unsavoury subject of the Contagious Diseases Act, upon the burials bill, the parliamentary and municipal elections bill, the question of education in Scotland, and the regulation of mines. Even the "sweet simplicity" of Mr. Lowe's financial state-

ment failed to arouse him out of his disciplined reticence.

But if Mr. Disraeli was silent in the House, he made ample amends for all lack of parliamentary criticism in the brilliant speech he delivered during the Easter recess at Manchester. The enthusiasm with which he was received on his visit to this city plainly showed that the tide of Conservative reaction had begun to set in. Wherever Mr. Disraeli went vast crowds cheered him to the echo; and on his being made the central figure at a "demonstration" held at Pomona Palace, over two hundred Conservative and constitutional associations from all parts of Lancashire despatched their representatives to present him with addresses. It is estimated that on that occasion over forty thousand persons were crowding the palace and its grounds, whilst the surrounding streets were completely blocked by the mob. The event of the week was, however, the speech delivered by Mr. Disraeli on Conservative principles, in the Free Trade Hall (April 3, 1872), before one of the largest audiences that had ever assembled in the city. It is a masterly exposition of the creed of Conservatism, of what Conservatism wishes to uphold, and of what it is prepared to abolish.

To understand the tone of some of the remarks we must remember that during the previous few months Sir Charles Dilke had been stumping the country, preaching a kind of republicanism and water, and especially attacking the civil list and the expenses of royalty. Happily his statements were so full of inaccuracies, that they only tended to do hurt to the cause he advocated, and to cover him with well-merited ridicule. On the occasion of Sir Charles bringing his imaginary grievances before parliament, the "citizen" was very judiciously snubbed by Mr. Gladstone. "The whole notions," said Mr. Gladstone, "entertained by my hon. friend about the enormous accumulations by the crown—whether from the civil list

or from any other source—are utterly visionary and groundless. I do not possess, I am not authorized to give, and I am sure the House of Commons does not wish to receive—I believe that if offered it would indignantly repel it—any minute information on the subject; but I say, and know the truth of my words, that nothing could be more visionary than the opinions entertained on this point by my hon. friend.”

These misstatements and other topics then attracting public attention furnished Mr. Disraeli with texts for his discourse as he faced the immense audience gathered together within the walls of the Manchester Free Trade Hall. After a few preparatory remarks he plunged at once into his subject—the views and teaching of the Conservative party.

“Our opponents assure us,” he said, “that the Conservative party have no political programme; and, therefore, they must look with much satisfaction to one whom you honour to-night by considering him the leader and representative of your opinions, when he comes forward at your invitation to express to you what that programme is. The Conservative party are accused of having no programme of policy. *If by a programme is meant a plan to despoil churches and plunder landlords, I admit we have no programme.* If by a programme is meant *a policy which assails or menaces every institution and every interest, every class and every calling in the country, I admit we have no programme.* But if to have a policy with distinct ends, and these such as most deeply interest the great body of the nation, be a becoming programme for a political party, then, I contend, we have an adequate programme, and one which, here or elsewhere, I shall always be prepared to assert and to vindicate.

“Gentlemen, the programme of the Conservative party is to maintain the constitution of the country. I have not come down to Manchester to deliver an essay on the English constitution; but when the banner

of republicanism is unfurled—when the fundamental principles of our institutions are controverted—I think, perhaps, it may not be inconvenient that I should make some few practical remarks upon the character of our constitution—upon that monarchy, limited by the co-ordinate authority of estates of the realm, which, under the title of Queen, Lords, and Commons,* has contributed so greatly to the prosperity of this country, and with the maintenance of which I believe that prosperity is bound up.

“Gentlemen, since the settlement of that constitution, now nearly two centuries ago, England has never experienced a revolution, though there is no country in which there has been so continuous and such considerable change. How is this? Because the wisdom of your forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of human passions. Whatever the struggle of parties, whatever the strife of factions, whatever the excitement and exaltation of the public mind, there has always been something in this country round which all classes and parties could rally, representing the majesty of the law, the administration of justice, and involving, at the same time, the security for every man's rights and the fountain of honour. Now, gentlemen, it is well clearly to comprehend what is meant by a country not having a revolution for two centuries. It means, for that space, the unbroken exercise and enjoyment of the ingenuity of man. It means, for that space, the continuous application of the discoveries of science to his comfort and convenience. It means the accumulation of capital, the elevation of labour, the establishment of those admirable factories which cover your district; the unwearied improvement of the cultivation of the land, which has extracted from a somewhat churlish soil harvests more exuberant than those furnished by lands nearer to the sun. It means the continuous order which is the only parent

* Mr. Disraeli made a little slip here; the estates of the realm are not “Queen, Lords, and Commons,” but the Lords Spiritual the Lords Temporal, and the Commons.

of personal liberty and political right. And you owe all these, gentlemen, to the throne.

"There is another powerful and most beneficial influence which is also exercised by the crown. Gentlemen, I am a party man. I believe that, without party, parliamentary government is impossible. I look upon parliamentary government as the noblest government in the world, and certainly the one most suited to England. But without the discipline of political connection, animated by the principle of private honour, I feel certain that a popular assembly would sink before the power or the corruption of a minister. Yet I am not blind to the faults of party government. It has one great defect. Party has a tendency to warp the intelligence, and there is no minister, however resolved he may be in treating a great public question, who does not find some difficulty in emancipating himself from the traditional prejudice on which he has long acted. It is, therefore, a great merit in our constitution that, before a minister introduces a measure to parliament, he must submit it to an intelligence superior to all party, and entirely free from influences of that character.

"I know it will be said that, however beautiful in theory, the personal influence of the sovereign is now absorbed in the responsibility of the minister. I think you will find there is great fallacy in this view. *The principles of the English constitution do not contemplate the absence of personal influence on the part of the sovereign*; and if they did the principles of human nature would prevent the fulfilment of such a theory.* Gentlemen, I need not tell you that I am now making on this subject abstract observations of general application to our institutions and our history. But

* "The people of this country are under a great mistake if they suppose that the sovereign does not exercise a real, salutary, and decided influence over the councils and government of the country. The sovereign is not the mere automaton, or puppet, of the government of the day. She exercises a beneficial influence and control over the affairs of the state; and it is the duty of the minister for the time being, in submitting any proposition for the assent of Her Majesty, to give satisfactory reasons that such propositions are called for by public policy, and justified by the public

interests. If the sovereign is not satisfied with the advice tendered to her—if, either from the suggestions of her own mind, or from objections which may be suggested to her by [the Prince Consort], Her Majesty is of opinion that she will not accept the advice of the responsible minister of the crown, the course of the crown and the minister is equally open. The course of the crown is to refuse to accept that advice of the minister, and the inevitable consequence to the minister would be the tender of his resignation."—*Speech of Lord Derby. Hansard, vol. cxxx., p. 103.*

"Gentlemen, the influence of the crown is not confined merely to political affairs. England is a domestic country. Here the home is revered and the hearth is sacred. The nation is represented by a family—the royal family; and if that family is educated with a sense of responsibility and a sentiment of public duty, it is difficult to exaggerate the salutary influence they may exercise over a nation. It is not merely an influence upon manners; it is not merely that they are a model for refinement and for good taste—they affect the heart as well as the intelligence of the people; and in the hour of public adversity, or in the anxious conjuncture of public affairs, the nation rallies round the family and the throne, and its spirit is animated and sustained by the expression of public affection."

Mr. Disraeli then referred to the charges brought forward by Sir Charles Dilke. Sir Charles had said in his notorious speech at Newcastle, that the position and direct cost of royalty to the country was about a million a year.

"Gentlemen, there is yet one other remark that I would make upon our monarchy, though, had it not been for recent circumstances, I should have refrained from doing so. An attack has recently been made upon the throne on account of the costliness of the institution. Gentlemen, I shall not dwell upon the fact that if the people of England appreciate the monarchy, as I believe they do, it would be painful to them that their royal and representative family should not be maintained with becoming dignity, or should fill in the public eye a position inferior to some of the nobles of the land. Nor will I insist upon what is unquestionably the fact, that the revenues of the crown estates, on which our sovereign might live with as much right as the Duke of Bedford or the Duke of Northumberland has to his estates, are now paid into the public exchequer. All this, upon the present occasion, I am not going to insist upon. *What I now say is this, that there is no sovereignty of any first-*

rate state which costs so little to the people as the sovereignty of England. I will not compare our civil list with those of European empires, because it is known that in amount they treble and quadruple it; but I will compare it with the cost of sovereignty in a republic, and that a republic with which you are intimately acquainted—the republic of the United States of America. There is no analogy between the position of our sovereign, Queen Victoria, and that of the president of the United States. The president of the United States is not the sovereign of the United States. There is a very near analogy between the position of the president of the United States and that of the prime minister of England, and both are paid at much the same rate—the income of a second-class professional man."

He then proceeded to sketch the constitution of the United States. The sovereign of the United States was the people, and the United States consisted of thirty-seven independent states, each with a sovereign legislature. Besides those there was a confederation of states to conduct their external affairs, which consisted of a house of representatives and a senate. There were 285 members of the house of representatives, and there were seventy-four members of the senate, making altogether 358 members of Congress. Each member of Congress received £1000 sterling per annum. In addition to that he received an allowance called "mileage," which varied according to the distance which he travelled, but the aggregate cost of which was about £30,000 per annum. That made £389,000, almost the exact amount of the civil list of England. Yet that was not all. Every member of every legislature in the thirty-seven states was also paid. There were, he believed, 5010 members of state legislatures, who received about 350 dollars per annum each; 5010 members of state legislatures at 350 dollars each made 1,753,500 dollars, or £350,700 sterling a year. Thus the immediate expenditure for the sovereignty of the United States was

between £700,000 and £800,000 a year. Again, members of royal commissions in England were unpaid, but in the United States every member of commissions was paid. So much for the cheapness of a republican form of government.

Mr. Disraeli next touched upon the constitution of the House of Lords. It was not merely the authority of the throne that was disputed, but the character and influence of the House of Lords that were held up by some to public disregard. He would not stop to offer any proofs of the advantage of a second chamber; for that subject had been discussed ever since the establishment of the government of the United States, and all great authorities, American, German, French, Italian, had agreed that a representative government was impossible *without a second chamber*. And it had been, especially of late, maintained by great political writers in all countries, that the repeated failure of what was called the French Republic was mainly to be ascribed to its not having a second chamber.

"But, gentlemen," he continued, "however anxious foreign countries have been to enjoy this advantage, that anxiety has only been equalled by the difficulty which they have found in fulfilling their object. How is a second chamber to be constituted? By nominees of the sovereign power? What influence can be exercised by a chamber of nominees? Are they to be bound by popular election? In what manner are they to be elected? If by the same constituency as the popular body, what claim have they, under such circumstances, to criticise or to control the decisions of that body? If they are to be elected by a more select body, qualified by a higher franchise, there immediately occurs the objection, why should the majority be governed by the minority? The United States of America were fortunate in finding a solution of this difficulty; but the United States of America had elements to deal with which never occurred before, and never probably will occur again, because they formed their illustrious senate

from the materials that were offered them by the thirty-seven states. We, gentlemen, have the House of Lords, an assembly which has historically developed and periodically adapted itself to the wants and necessities of the times.

"What is the first quality which is required in a second chamber? Without doubt, independence. What is the best foundation of independence? Without doubt, property. The prime minister of England has only recently told you, and I believe he spoke quite accurately, that the average income of the members of the House of Lords is £20,000 per annum. Of course there are some who have more and some who have less; but the influence of a public assembly, so far as property is concerned, depends upon its aggregate property which, in the present case, is a revenue of £9,000,000 a year. But, gentlemen, you must look to the nature of this property. It is visible property, and therefore it is responsible property, which every ratepayer in the room knows to his cost. But it is not only visible property; it is, generally speaking, territorial property; and one of the elements of territorial property is that it is representative. Now, for illustration, suppose—which God forbid—there was no House of Commons, and any Englishman—I will take him from either end of the island—a Cumberland or a Cornish man, finds himself aggrieved. The Cumbrian says, 'This conduct I experience is most unjust. I know a Cumberland man in the House of Lords, the Earl of Carlisle or the Earl of Lonsdale; I will go to him; he will never see a Cumberland man ill-treated.' The Cornish man will say, 'I will go to the Lord of Port Eliot; his family have sacrificed themselves before this for the liberties of Englishmen, and he will get justice done me.'

"But the charge against the House of Lords is that the dignities are hereditary, and we are told that if we have a House of Peers they should be peers for life. There are great authorities in favour of this, and

even my noble friend near me [Lord Derby] the other day gave in his adhesion to a limited application of this principle. Now, gentlemen, in the first place let me observe that every peer is a peer for life, as he cannot be a peer after his death; but some peers for life are succeeded in their dignities by their children. The question arises, who is most responsible—a peer for life whose dignities are not descendible, or a peer for life whose dignities are hereditary? Now, gentlemen, a peer for life is in a very strong position. He says, 'Here I am; I have got power and I will exercise it.' I have no doubt that, on the whole, a peer for life would exercise it for what he deemed was the public good. Let us hope that. But, after all, he might and could exercise it according to his own will. *Nobody can call him to account; he is independent of everybody.* But a peer for life whose dignities descend is in a very different position. He has every inducement to study public opinion, and, when he believes it just, to yield; because he naturally feels that if the order to which he belongs is in constant collision with public opinion, the chances are that his dignities will not descend to his posterity."

He was, therefore, not prepared to believe that a solution of any difficulties in the public mind on that subject was to be found by creating peers for life. He knew there were some philosophers who believed, that the best substitute for the House of Lords would be an assembly formed of the ex-governors of colonies. He had not sufficient experience on that subject to give a decided opinion upon it. When the Muse of Comedy threw her frolic grace over society, a retired governor was generally one of the characters in every comedy. He was inclined to believe that an English gentleman—born to business, managing his own estate, administering the affairs of his county, mixing with all classes of his fellow-men, now in the hunting field, now in the railway direction, unaffected, unostentatious, proud of his ancestors, if they had contributed to

the greatness of their common country—was, on the whole, more likely to form a senator agreeable to English opinion and English taste than any substitute that had yet been produced. Again, there was some advantage in political experience. He remembered the time when there was a similar outcry against the House of Lords, only more intense and powerful, but arising from the same cause. A Liberal government had been installed in office, with an immense Liberal majority. They proposed some violent measures. The House of Lords modified some, delayed others, and some they threw out. Instantly there was a cry to abolish or to reform the House of Lords, and O'Connell was sent on a pilgrimage over to England to excite the people in favour of this opinion. What happened? There was a dissolution of parliament. The great Liberal majority vanished. The balance of parties was restored. It was discovered that the House of Lords had behind them at least half of the English people. They heard no more cries for their abolition or their reform, and before two years more passed England was really governed by the House of Lords, under the wise influence of the Duke of Wellington and the commanding eloquence of Lyndhurst; and such was the enthusiasm of the nation in favour of the second chamber that at every public meeting its health was drunk, with the additional sentiment "Thank God, there is the House of Lords."

From the Upper to the Lower House was an inevitable transition. "Gentlemen," continued Mr. Disraeli, "you will perhaps not be surprised that, having made some remarks upon the monarchy and the House of Lords, I should say something respecting that House in which I have literally passed the greater part of my life, and to which I am devotedly attached. It is not likely, therefore, that I should say anything to depreciate the legitimate position and influence of the House of Commons. It is said that the diminished

power of the throne and the assailed authority of the House of Lords are owing to the increased power of the House of Commons, and the new position which of late years, and especially during the last forty years, it has assumed in the English constitution. Gentlemen, the main power of the House of Commons depends upon its command over the public purse and its control of the public expenditure; and if that power is possessed by a party which has a large majority in the House of Commons, the influence of the House of Commons is proportionately increased, and, under some circumstances, becomes more predominant. But, gentlemen, this power of the House of Commons is not a power which has been created by any Reform Act, from the days of Lord Grey in 1832 to 1867. It is the power which the House of Commons has enjoyed for centuries—which it has frequently asserted, and sometimes even tyrannically exercised. Gentlemen, the House of Commons represents the constituencies of England; and I am here to show you that no addition to the elements of that constituency has placed the House of Commons in a different position with regard to the throne and the House of Lords from that it has always constitutionally occupied. We speak now on this subject with great advantage. We recently have had published authentic documents upon this matter, which are highly instructive. We have, for example, just published the census of Great Britain, and we are now in possession of the last registration of voters for the United Kingdom. Gentlemen, it appears that by the census the population at this time is about 32,000,000. It is shown by the last registration that, after making the usual deductions for deaths, removals, double entries, and so on, the constituency of the United Kingdom may be placed at 2,200,000. So, gentlemen, it at once appears that there are 30,000,000 people in this country who are as much represented by the House of Lords as by the House of Commons, and who, for the

protection of their rights, must depend upon them and the majesty of the throne.

"And now, gentlemen, I will tell you what was done by the last Reform Act. Lord Grey, in his measure of 1832, which was no doubt a statesmanlike measure, committed a great and for a time it appeared an irretrievable error. By that measure he fortified the legitimate influence of the aristocracy, and accorded to the middle classes great and salutary franchises; but he not only made no provision for the representation of the working classes in the constitution, but he absolutely abolished those ancient franchises which the working classes had peculiarly enjoyed and exercised from time immemorial. Gentlemen, that was the origin of Chartism, and of that electoral uneasiness which existed in this country more or less for thirty years. The Liberal party, I feel it my duty to say, had not acted fairly by this question. In their adversity they held out hopes to the working classes, but when they had a strong government they laughed their vows to scorn. In 1848 there was a French revolution and a republic was established. No one can have forgotten what the effect was in this country. I remember the day when not a woman could leave her house in London, and when cannon were planted on Westminster Bridge. When Lord Derby became prime minister, affairs had arrived at such a point that it was of the first moment that the question should be sincerely dealt with. He had to encounter great difficulties, but he accomplished his purpose with the support of a united party. And what has been the result? A year ago there was another revolution in France, and a republic was again established of the most menacing character. What happened in this country? You could not get half a dozen men to assemble in a street and grumble. Why? Because the people had got what they wanted. They were content and they were grateful."

The constitution of England, however, he continued, was not merely a constitution

in state, it was a constitution in church and state. The wisest sovereigns and statesmen had ever been anxious to connect authority with religion—some to increase their power, some perhaps to mitigate its exercise. But the same difficulty had been experienced in effecting that union which had been experienced in forming a Second Chamber—either the spiritual power had usurped upon the civil and established a sacerdotal society, or the civil power had invaded successfully the rights of the spiritual, and the ministers of religion had been degraded into stipendiaries of the state and instruments of the government. In England they accomplished that great result by an alliance between church and state, between two originally independent powers; and that union had contributed for centuries to the civilization of the country. Yet there had been the same assault against the Church of England and the union between the state and the church as there had been against the monarchy and against the House of Lords. It was said that the existence of nonconformity proved that the church was a failure. He drew, however, from those premisses an exactly contrary conclusion; and he maintained that to have secured a national profession of faith with the unlimited enjoyment of private judgment in matters spiritual was the solution of the most difficult problem, and one of the triumphs of civilization.

Nor did he consider that the existence of parties in the church had proved its incompetence. Parties had always existed in the church; and some have appealed to them as arguments in favour of its Divine institution, because in the services and doctrines of the church had been found representatives of every mood in the human mind. Those who were influenced by ceremonies found consolation in forms which secured to them "the beauty of holiness." Those who were not satisfied except with enthusiasm found in its ministrations the exaltation they required; while others, who believed that

"the anchor of faith" could never be safely moored except in the dry sands of reason, found a religion within the pale of the church which could boast of its irrefragable logic and its irresistible evidence. Those who advocated the abolition of the union between church and state had not, in his opinion, carefully considered the consequences of such a course. The church was a powerful corporation of many millions of Her Majesty's subjects, with a consummate organization and wealth which in its aggregate was vast. Restricted and controlled by the state, so powerful a corporation might be only fruitful of public advantage; but it became a great question what might be the consequence of the severance of the controlling tie between those two bodies. The state would be enfeebled, but the church would probably be strengthened. Whether that was a result to be desired was a grave question for all men. For his part, he doubted whether it would be favourable to the cause of civil and religious liberty. There was a common idea that if the union between church and state was severed, the wealth of the church would revert to the state; but it would be well to remember that the great proportion of ecclesiastical property was the property of individuals. Take, for example, the fact that the great mass of church patronage was patronage in the hands of private persons. That could not be touched without compensation to the patrons, for that principle had been established in the late Irish bill, where there was very little patronage. And in the present state of the public mind on the subject, there was very little doubt that there would be scarcely a patron in England—irrespective of other aid the church would receive—who would not dedicate his compensation to the spiritual wants of his neighbours.

"It was computed," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "some years ago that the property of the church in this manner, if the union was terminated, would not be less than between £80,000,000 and £90,000,000; and

since that period the amount of private property dedicated to the purposes of the church has very largely increased. I therefore trust that when the occasion offers for the country to speak out, it will speak out in an unmistakable manner on this subject; and, recognizing the inestimable services of the church, that it will call *upon the government to maintain its union with the state*. Upon this subject there is one remark I would make," he continued, alluding to the hostility of the dissenters to denominational education. "Nothing is more surprising to me than the plea on which the present outcry is made against the Church of England. I could not believe that in the nineteenth century the charge against the Church of England should be that churchmen, and especially the clergy, *had educated the people*. If I were to fix upon one circumstance more than another which redounded to the honour of churchmen, it is, that they should fulfil this noble office; and, next to being 'the stewards of Divine mysteries,' I think the greatest distinction of the clergy is the admirable manner in which they have devoted their lives and their fortunes to this greatest of national objects.

"Gentlemen, you are well acquainted in this city with this controversy. It was in this city—I don't know whether it was not in this hall—that that remarkable meeting was held of the Nonconformists to effect important alterations in the Education Act, and you are acquainted with the discussion in parliament which arose in consequence of that meeting. Gentlemen, I have due and great respect for the Nonconformist body. I acknowledge their services to their country; and though I believe that the political reasons which mainly called them into existence have entirely ceased, it is impossible not to treat with consideration a body which has been eminent for its conscience, its learning, and its patriotism. But I must express my mortification that, from a feeling of envy or of pique, the Noncon-

formist body, *rather than assist the church in their great enterprise, should absolutely have become the partisans of a merely secular education*. I believe myself that without the recognition of a superintending Providence in the affairs of this world all national education will be disastrous, and I feel confident that it is impossible to stop at that mere recognition. Religious education is demanded by the nation generally and by the instincts of human nature. I should like to see the church and the Nonconformists work together; but I trust, whatever may be the result, the country will stand by the church in its efforts to maintain the religious education of the people. Gentlemen, I foresee yet trials for the Church of England; but I am confident in its future. I am confident in its future, because I believe there is now a very general feeling that to be national it must be comprehensive. I will not use the word 'broad,' because it is an epithet applied to a system with which I have no sympathy. But I would wish churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our 'Father's House are many mansions,' and I believe that comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas, without which I hold no practical religion can exist."

The next topic which attracted the attention of Mr. Disraeli was the condition of the people. What was the condition of the great body of the people? In the first place, they had for centuries been in the full enjoyment of that which no other country of Europe had ever completely attained—complete rights of personal freedom. In the second place, there had been a gradual, and therefore a wise, distribution on a large scale of political rights. During the last forty years, and especially in the north of England, wages had been raised and toil had diminished; and increased means and increased leisure were the two civilizers of man. That the working classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire had proved not un-

worthy of those boons might be easily maintained; but their progress and elevation had been during that interval wonderfully aided and assisted by three causes, which were not so distinctly attributable to their own energies. The first was the revolution in locomotion, which had opened the world to the working man, which had enlarged the horizon of his experience, increased his knowledge of nature and of art, and had added immensely to the salutary recreation, amusement, and pleasure of his existence. The second cause was the cheap postage, the moral benefits of which could not be exaggerated. And the third was that unshackled press which had furnished the working man with endless sources of instruction, information, and amusement.

"Gentlemen," he said, passing on to examine the condition of the peasant, "if you would permit me I would now make an observation upon another class of the labouring population. This is not a civic assembly, although we meet in a city. That was for convenience; but the invitation which I received was to meet the county and all the boroughs of Lancashire, and I wish to make a few observations upon the condition of the agricultural labourer. That is a subject which now greatly attracts public attention.* And, in the first place, to prevent any misconception, I beg to express my opinion that an agricultural labourer has as much right to combine for the bettering of his condition as a manufacturing labourer or worker in metals. If the causes of his combination are natural—that is to say, if they arise from his own feelings and from the necessities of his own condition—the combination will end in results mutually beneficial to employers and employed. If, on the other hand, it is factitious, and he is acted upon by extraneous influences and extraneous ideas, the combination will produce, I fear, much loss and misery both to employers and

employed; and after a time he will find himself in a similar or worse position. Gentlemen, in my opinion, *the farmers of England as a body cannot afford to pay higher wages than they do now*, and those who will answer me by saying that they must find their ability by the reduction of rents are, I think, involving themselves with economic laws which may prove too difficult for them to cope with. *The profits of a farmer are very moderate.* The interest upon capital invested in land is the smallest that any property furnishes. The farmer will have his profits and the investor in land will have his interest, even though they may be obtained at the cost of changing the mode of the cultivation of the country. Gentlemen, I should deeply regret to see the tillage of this country reduced, and a recurrence to pasture take place. I should regret it principally on account of the agricultural labourers themselves. Their new friends call them Hodge, and describe them as a stolid race. I must say that, from my experience of them, they are sufficiently shrewd and open to reason. I would say to them with confidence, as the great Athenian said to the Spartan who rudely assailed him, 'Strike, but hear me.'

"First, a change in the cultivation of the soil of this country would be very injurious to the labouring class; and secondly, I am of opinion that that class, instead of *being stationary, has made, if not as much progress as the manufacturing class, very considerable progress during the last forty years.* Many persons write and speak about the agricultural labourer with not so perfect a knowledge of his condition as is desirable. They treat him always as a human being who, in every part of the country, finds himself in an identical condition. Now, on the contrary, there is no class of labourers in which there is greater variety of condition than that of the agricultural labourers. It changes from north to south, from east to west, and from county to county. It changes even in the same county, where there is an alteration of soil and of con-

* Joseph Arch was then agitating for the formation of a labourers' union similar to the trades' unions of the cities.

figuration. The hind in Northumberland is in a very different condition from the famous Dorsetshire labourer—the tiller of the soil in Lincolnshire is different from his fellow agriculturist in Sussex. What the effect of manufactures is upon the agricultural districts in their neighbourhood it would be presumption in me to dwell upon; your own experience must tell you whether the agricultural labourer in North Lancashire, for example, has had no rise in wages and no diminution in toil. Take the case of the Dorsetshire labourer;—the whole of the agricultural labourers on the south-western coast of England for a very long period worked only half the time of the labourers in other parts of England, and received only half the wages. In the experience of many, I dare say, who are here present, even thirty years ago a Dorsetshire labourer never worked after three o'clock in the day; and why? Because the whole of that part of England was demoralized by smuggling. No one worked after three o'clock in the day for a very good reason—because he had to work at night. No farmer allowed his team to be employed after three o'clock, because he reserved his horses to take his illicit cargo at night and carry it rapidly into the interior. Therefore, as the men were employed and remunerated otherwise, they got into a habit of half work and half play so far as the land was concerned; and when smuggling was abolished—and it has only been abolished for thirty years—these imperfect habits of labour continued, and do even now continue to a great extent. That is the origin of the condition of the agricultural labourer in the south-western part of England.

“But now, gentlemen, I want to test the condition of the agricultural labourer generally; and I will take a part of England with which I am familiar, and can speak as to the accuracy of the facts—I mean the group described as the south-midland counties. The conditions of labour there are the same, or pretty nearly the same, throughout. The group may be

described as a strictly agricultural community, and they embrace a population of probably a million and a half. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that the improvement in their lot during the last forty years has been progressive and is remarkable. I attribute it to three causes. In the first place, the rise in their money wages is no less than fifteen per cent. The second great cause of their improvement is the almost total disappearance of excessive and exhausting toil, from the general introduction of machinery. I don't know whether I could get a couple of men who could or, if they could, would thrash a load of wheat in my neighbourhood. The third great cause which has improved their condition is the very general, not to say universal, institution of allotment grounds. Now, gentlemen, when I find that this has been the course of affairs in our very considerable and strictly agricultural portion of the country, where there have been no exceptional circumstances, like smuggling, to degrade and demoralize the race, I cannot resist the conviction that the condition of the agricultural labourers, instead of being stationary, as we are constantly told by those not acquainted with them, has been one of progressive improvement; and that in those counties—and they are many—where the stimulating influence of a manufacturing neighbourhood acts upon the land, the general conclusion at which I arrive is that *the agricultural labourer has had his share in the advance of national prosperity.*”

It was far from his object, Mr. Disraeli continued, to maintain that there was nothing to be done to increase the well-being of the working classes of the country, generally speaking. There was not a single class in the country which was not susceptible of improvement; and that made the life and animation of society. But much depended upon the working classes themselves; much also might be expected from that sympathy between classes which was a distinctive feature of the present day; and, in the last place, no inconsiderable results might be

obtained by judicious and prudent legislation. Still, in attempting to legislate upon social matters the great object was to be practical—to have before them some distinct aims and some distinct means by which reform could be accomplished. For example, public attention ought to be concentrated upon sanitary legislation. That was a wide subject, and if properly treated, comprised almost every consideration which had a just claim upon legislative interference. Pure air, pure water, the inspection of unhealthy habitations, the adulteration of food, those and many kindred matters might be legitimately dealt with by the legislature.

"Gentlemen, I cannot impress upon you too strongly my conviction of the importance of the legislature and society uniting together in favour of these important results. A great scholar and a great wit, 300 years ago, said that in his opinion there was a great mistake in the Vulgate, which as you all know is the Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, and that, instead of saying 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity'—*Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*—the wise and witty king really said *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*.* Gentlemen, it is impossible to overrate the importance of the subject. After all, the first consideration of a minister should be the health of the people. A land may be covered with historic trophies, with museums of science and galleries of art, with universities and with libraries; the people may be civilized and ingenious; the country may be even famous in the annals and action of the world: but, gentlemen, if the population every ten years decreases, and the stature of the race every ten years diminishes, the history of that country will soon be the history of the past."

The state of public affairs next came under the review of Mr. Disraeli. He could not pretend that their position either at home or abroad was satisfactory. At home, at a period of immense prosperity, with a people contented and naturally

loyal, they found to their surprise the most extravagant doctrines professed and the fundamental principles of their most valuable institutions impugned, and that too by persons of some authority. That startling inconsistency was accounted for, he explained, by the circumstances under which the Gladstone administration had been formed. It was the first instance in his knowledge of a British administration being avowedly formed on a principle of violence.

"It is unnecessary for me to remind you," said he, addressing a Lancashire audience which had turned out Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington, "of the circumstances which preceded the formation of that government. You were the principal scene and theatre of the development of statesmanship that then occurred. You witnessed the incubation of the portentous birth. You remember when you were informed, that the policy to secure the prosperity of Ireland and the content of Irishmen was a policy of sacrilege and confiscation. Gentlemen, when Ireland was placed under the wise and able administration of Lord Abercorn, Ireland was prosperous, and I may say content. But there happened at that time a very peculiar conjuncture in politics. The civil war in America had just ceased; and a band of military adventurers—Poles, Italians, and many Irishmen—concocted at New York a conspiracy to invade Ireland, with the belief that the whole country would rise to welcome them. How that conspiracy was baffled, how those plots were confounded, I need not now remind you. For that we were mainly indebted to the eminent qualities of a great man just left us,† You remember how the constituencies were appealed to, to vote against the government who had made so unfit an appointment as that of Lord Mayo to the viceroyalty of India. It was by his great

* This was the "policy of sewage" sneered at by the Liberals.

† Lord Mayo was assassinated at Port Blair, February 8, 1872. "The queen has lost in him," said Mr. Disraeli, "a devoted servant of inestimable value."

qualities when secretary for Ireland, by his vigilance, his courage, his patience, and his perseverance that this conspiracy was defeated. Never was a minister better informed. He knew what was going on at New York, just as well as what was going on in the city of Dublin. When the Fenian conspiracy had been entirely put down, it became necessary to consider the policy which it was expedient to pursue in Ireland; and it seemed to us at that time that what Ireland required, after all the excitement which it had experienced, was a policy which should largely develop its material resources. There were one or two subjects of a different character, which, for the advantage of the state, it would have been desirable to have settled, if that could have been effected with a general concurrence of both the great parties in that country. Had we remained in office, that would have been done. But we were destined to quit it, and we quitted it without a murmur. The policy of our successors was different. Their specific was *to despoil churches and plunder landlords, and what has been the result?* Sedition rampant, treason thinly veiled, and whenever a vacancy occurs in the representation a candidate is returned pledged to the disruption of the realm. Her Majesty's new ministers proceeded in their career like a body of men under the influence of some delirious drug. Not satiated with the spoliation and anarchy of Ireland, they began to attack every institution and every interest, every class and calling in the country." Mr. Disraeli then complained of the reforms in the army, which had ended by creating a standing army and in withdrawing the militia from all local influences; of the mismanagement of the navy, and the profligate expenditure that had been incurred; and of the suggestions brought forward by Mr. Lowe in his budget speeches.

"But, gentlemen," he summed up, "as time advanced it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being

substituted for energy by the government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysms ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sat opposite the Treasury bench, the ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. *You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes.* Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea."

Turning to foreign affairs Mr. Disraeli condemned, as he had before in the House of Commons condemned, the repudiation by Russia of the Black Sea clause in the treaty of Paris, and the humiliating compliance of the government with such repudiation.

"What will be the consequence of this extraordinary weakness on the part of the British government," he said, "it is difficult to foresee. Already we hear that Sebastopol is to be re-fortified, nor can any man doubt that the entire command of the Black Sea will soon be in the possession of Russia. The time may not be distant when we may hear of the Russian power in the Persian Gulf, and what effect that may have upon the dominions of England and upon those possessions on the productions of which you every year more and more depend, are questions upon which it will be well for you on proper occasions to meditate." With regard to their relations with the United States, Mr. Disraeli expressed the same opinions as he had before delivered in the House of Commons. He blamed the government for drawing up a treaty which was capable of two interpretations, and he frankly declared that on no grounds could the indirect claims be admitted.

"Gentlemen," he said in conclusion, "don't suppose, because I counsel firmness and decision at the right moment, that I am of that school of statesmen who are favourable to a turbulent and aggressive diplomacy.

I have resisted it during a great part of my life. I am not unaware that the relations of England to Europe have undergone a vast change during the century that has just elapsed. The relations of England to Europe are not the same as they were in the days of Lord Chatham or Frederick the Great. *The Queen of England has become the sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental states.* On the other side of the globe there are now establishments belonging to her, teeming with wealth and population, which will, in due time, exercise their influence over the distribution of power. The old establishments of this country, now the United States of America, throw their lengthening shades over the Atlantic, which mix with European waters. These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power. I acknowledge that the policy of England with respect to Europe should be a *policy of reserve, but proud reserve*; and in answer to those statesmen, those mistaken statesmen, who have intimated the decay of the power of England and the decline of its resources, I express here my confident conviction that there never was a moment in our history when the power of England was so great and her resources so vast and inexhaustible.

"And yet, gentlemen, it is not merely our fleets and armies, our powerful artillery, our accumulated capital, and our unlimited credit on which I so much depend, as upon that unbroken spirit of her people, which I believe was never prouder of the imperial country to which they belong. Gentlemen, it is to that spirit that I above all things trust. I look upon the people of Lancashire as a fair representative of the people of England. I think the manner in which they have invited me here, locally a stranger, to receive the expression of their cordial sympathy, and only because they recognize some effort on my part to maintain the greatness of their country, is evidence of the spirit of the land. I must express to you again my deep sense of the generous manner in which you have welcomed me,

and in which you have permitted me to express to you my views upon public affairs. Proud of your confidence and encouraged by your sympathy, I now deliver to you, as my last words, the cause of the Tory party, the English constitution, and of the British empire."

This speech was a brilliant success, and created a profound impression throughout the country. At a time when every interest in the kingdom was being put under the harrow of revolution which was called reform, and when every institution was being undermined, it was satisfactory to find that there was a party in the state hostile to revolutionary innovations and content to stand upon the old paths. The country had been wearied and irritated with a domestic policy that was confiscation, with a foreign policy that was concession, and with a financial system which was based upon an increased income tax. The country had had enough, and to spare, of legislative overhauling and of domineering administrative incapacity, and wanted only rest and opportunity to introduce and develop the social reforms she had long been agitating for. Mr. Gladstone had so "plundered and blundered," that if the House of Commons had been compelled to shut its doors for a term of years, the suspension of that branch of the legislature would have been regarded by the nation as a positive relief. No class, no calling, was safe so long as the splenetic dissatisfaction with everything and everybody which characterized the prime minister was permitted to vent itself upon the existing institutions of the country.

As men during the turbulent days of France were wont to ask, with almost as much truth as humour in the question, "Under what government do we live this morning?" so England, under the sway of this meddlesome administration, was daily nervous and inquisitive as to what special interest and institution was about to be harried. Would it be next the turn of the Church of England to be "reformed," or of the landed interest, or of

the Upper House, or of the city companies, or of the railways, hospitals, gas and water monopolies, or of what? From what diplomatic guarantees were we next to withdraw, what concession of territory were we next to grant, what clause in a treaty written in the blood of her sons was England next to sanction the repudiation of—these were questions which were bitterly asked, and the responses they educed shook the public confidence and aroused the public indignation. But here Mr. Disraeli stepped in with the programme of the Conservative party, and the contrast between the practice of the Ministerialists and the creed of the Opposition was positively refreshing. Under Conservatism the power of the throne was still to exercise its influence over the legislature, of which it was ever to form part; the second chamber was still to display its moderating wisdom and to appeal in seasons of crisis to the sober second thought of the nation; the church, in spite of intestine feuds and external attacks, was still to maintain its alliance with the state for the purification of public morality and the preservation of sound religious teaching. Those institutions Conservatism pledged itself at Manchester to strengthen and uphold, and from that date a marked reactionary feeling set in against the pernicious and arrogant interference of modern Radicalism.

High and low, rich and poor, all came under the influence of this reaction. Arrayed against the government were the majority of the clergy, of the dissenting interest, of the military element, of the licensed victuallers, and of the patriotic in spirit. The working man, who had made the first use of his exercise of the franchise by bringing in a Liberal administration, now sorely repented of his mistaken zeal, and was amongst the most enthusiastic of the supporters of a Conservative policy. The cheers with which he had greeted Mr. Disraeli at Manchester were taken up by all the sons of toil, and made to re-echo throughout the land. For the working man

the Liberal government had done nothing. The abolition of the Irish Church had not benefited him; the clauses in the Irish land bill failed to interest him; he was indifferent to the abolition of purchase, and to the charms of secret voting. All that a Liberal government had done for him was to have him turned out of his village ale-house at an earlier hour than he was accustomed to, and thus to "rob a poor man of his beer." One of the most prominent features of the Conservative reaction which now set in was the vast influx of the working classes into the ranks of those who opposed the policy of Mr. Gladstone. When the time came—not for some months yet—for members to appeal to their constituencies, not a few of the Conservative triumphs then won in the ballot sheds were due to the teaching of this speech at Manchester, to the warnings it sounded, and to the advice it gave.

A few weeks after his return from the north, Mr. Disraeli was called upon to take part in one of those formal festivities which his presence so often graced. No man, as we have before had occasion to remark, was more happy in the peculiar style of oratory he affected on occasions of ceremony than the late Lord Beaconsfield. When he consented to preside at the unveiling of a statue of some distinguished person, or to open a public hall, or to attend the anniversary of an hospital, or to propose or reply to some toast at a public banquet, he invariably acquitted himself to the delight and amusement of all assembled. Next to Charles Dickens, he was the best after-dinner speaker of his day. He had a combination of gifts not often to be met with in the same person. He was humorous, witty, and often flippant, yet never once was he undignified; no matter what was his subject, no matter whether his treatment was comic or severe, whether he was laudatory or condemnatory, his manner was always full of dignity. Like the great Chatham, he was on all public occasions ever mindful that familiarity breeds con-

tempt, and that men are as much impressed by the style and manner in which a speech is delivered as by the words that are uttered. He invariably acted on the advice given by Canning to a young politician of much promise—"When you speak always remember you are a gentleman." In the records of *Hansard* it would be impossible to find a man who possessed more the varied gifts of the born orator—passion, wit, humour, invective, and the lucid marshalling of the ideas he has to put forward—than Mr. Disraeli; yet often as he spoke both in and out of the House of Commons, deep and personal as was the animosity he kindled, his worst foe never accused him of being forgetful of his sense of dignity, and of the proper respect due to himself and his audience. Indeed, he was sometimes accused of carrying this cold and lofty demeanour to such an extent as to be "theatrical." It is curious to notice how often, whenever Mr. Disraeli had to remonstrate against the boisterous behaviour of the House of Commons, the words "dignity of debate" occur.

The popular King of the Belgians being on a visit to our shores at a time when the Literary Fund dinner was about to be given, had graciously consented to take the chair on the occasion. The compliment was appreciated by a large assembly of guests, consisting of statesmen, politicians, and the more distinguished among the representatives of literature, science, and art. Never in the annals of the Fund had so many eminent names been placed on the list of stewards, never had so numerous a gathering sat down to table, as at the memorable dinner of May 8, 1872. It fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli to propose the health of His Majesty, and nothing could be more felicitous than the few remarks he made in discharging this agreeable duty. His speech is perhaps the best specimen we have of his more finished style of after-dinner oratory. The allusion to Belgium and her first sovereign was in excellent taste; the comment of a monarch presiding

over a republic of letters was also very happy.

"Sire," he said, and it was remarked that Mr. Disraeli, always obedient to his sense of the dignity of things, was the only speaker during the evening who thus addressed the royal chairman—"Sire, forty years ago a portion of Europe, and one not the least fair, seemed doomed by an inexorable fate to permanent dependence and periodical devastation. And yet the conditions of that country were favourable to civilization and human happiness: a fertile soil skilfully cultivated, a land covered with beautiful cities and occupied by a race prone alike to liberty and religion, and always excelling in the fine arts. In the midst of a European convulsion, a great statesman resolved to terminate that deplorable destiny, and conceived the idea of establishing the independence of Belgium on the principle of political neutrality. That idea was welcomed at first with sceptical contempt. But we who live in the after generation can bear witness to the triumphant success of that principle, and can now take the opportunity of congratulating that noble policy which consecrated to perpetual peace the battle-field of Europe.

"Such a fortunate result was, no doubt, owing in a great degree to the qualities of the race which inhabited the land. They have shown on more than one occasion, under severe trials, that they have possessed those two qualities which can alone enable a nation to maintain the principle of neutrality—alike energy and discretion. But we must not forget that it was their fortunate lot that the first monarch who ascended their throne was the most eminent statesman of the nineteenth century. With consummate prudence, with unerring judgment, with vast and varied experience, he combined those qualities which at the same time win and retain the heart of communities. We can especially at this moment remember with pride that he was virtually an English prince—not merely because he

was doubly allied to our royal race, but because he had been educated—and with his observant mind such an opportunity was invaluable—he had been educated for years in this country in the practice of constitutional freedom. And when he ascended the throne he proved at once that he was determined to be, not the chief of a party, but the monarch of a nation.

"When he left us Europe was disheartened. The times were troublous and menacing, and all felt how much depended upon the character of his successor. In the presence of that successor it does not become me—it would be in every sense presumptuous—to offer a panegyric. But I may be permitted to speak of a public career in the language of critical appreciation; and I think that all will agree that the King of the Belgians, from the first moment at which he entered into public life, proved that he was sensible of the spirit of the age in which he lived, that he felt that authority to be revered must be enlightened, and that the seat of no sovereign was so secure as that of him who had confidence in his subjects. The King of the Belgians, our sovereign chairman, derived from his royal father another heritage besides the fair province of Flanders: he inherited an affection for the people of England. He has proved that in many instances and on many occasions, but never, in my mind, with more happy boldness than when he crossed the Channel, and determined to accept our invitation and become the chairman of the Royal Literary Fund. With what felicity he has fulfilled his duties this evening you are all witnesses. I have been connected with your society for many years, as those who preceded me with my name also were long before; and I think I can venture to say that in your annals none of those who have sat in that chair have performed its duties in a manner more admirable. It is something delightful, though at first sight inconsistent, that the republic of letters should, as it were, be presided over to-day by a monarch; but if there be a charming

inconsistency in such a circumstance, let us meet it with one as amiably flagrant and give to our sovereign chairman to-night a right royal welcome. It is with these feelings, gentlemen, that I now propose to you 'The Health of His Majesty the King.'"

The business of the session was not very important, and Mr. Disraeli contented himself less with elaborate criticisms passed upon the measures then being introduced, than with a general supervision of affairs, so that no delay should be occasioned or factious opposition set on foot. There was, however, not much to engage his attention. Mr. Gladstone was doing his best to anger and divide his mechanical majority, and with such success that Mr. Disraeli more than once, with his customary political chivalry, came to the aid of his rival instead of enjoying the malicious confusion that had been created. So especially was this the case throughout the negotiations with the United States, that the prime minister publicly thanked the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons for the course he had pursued. "I am glad to take this opportunity," said Mr. Gladstone when replying to a criticism of Mr. Disraeli upon the treaty of Washington (June 28, 1872), "of rendering to the right hon. gentleman, as an opponent, my testimony to the signal prudence and forbearance with which he has conducted himself, and for the example which he has set to others, during the whole of the anxious period of the present session since the controversy with the United States began."

Though silent in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli again addressed himself to the country a few weeks before the session closed. Entertained at the Crystal Palace, at a public banquet given in his honour by those who supported and followed him, he carefully explained the difference that existed between the principles of Conservatism and Liberalism. He saw that the day was not far distant when his party should again be called to power; and it was right that the country should be fully

informed as to those points upon which the one political section differed from the other. In his speech at Manchester he had expounded the creed of Conservatism; in his speech at Sydenham he was to estimate it in relation to its rival faith; at the one place he had been a dissector, at the other he was to be a comparative anatomist.

He began (June 24, 1872) by explaining how the Toryism of the past had departed from the truth and purity of its original teaching. Some years ago, he said, the Tory party had experienced a great and deserved overthrow. A long course of power and prosperity had induced it to sink into a state of apathy and indifference, and it had deviated from the great principles of that political association which had so long regulated the affairs and been identified with the glory of England. Instead of the principles professed by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, and which those great men had inherited from Tory statesmen who had preceded them not less illustrious, the Tory system had degenerated into a policy which found an adequate basis on the principles of exclusiveness and restriction. The Tory party, unless it was a national party, was nothing. It was not a confederacy of nobles, it was not a democratic multitude; it was a party formed from all the numerous classes in the realm—classes alike and equal before the law, but whose different conditions and different aims gave vigour and variety to their national life.

"Gentlemen," he said, "a body of public men distinguished by their capacity took advantage of these circumstances. They seized the helm of affairs in a manner the honour of which I do not for a moment question, but they introduced a new system into our political life. Influenced in a great degree by the philosophy and the politics of the Continent, they endeavoured to substitute cosmopolitan for national principles; and they baptized the new scheme of politics with the plausible name of 'Liberalism.'

Far be it from me for a moment to intimate that a country like England should not profit by the political experience of Continental nations of not inferior civilization; far be it from me for a moment to maintain that the party which then obtained power, and which has since generally possessed it, did not make many suggestions for our public life that were of great value, and bring forward many measures which, though changes, were nevertheless improvements. But the tone and tendency of Liberalism cannot be long concealed. *It is to attack the institutions of the country under the name of Reform, and to make war on the manners and customs of the people of this country under the pretext of Progress.* During the forty years that have elapsed since the commencement of this new system—although the superficial have seen upon its surface only the contentions of political parties—the real state of affairs has been this: the attempt of one party to establish in this country cosmopolitan ideas, and the efforts of another—unconscious efforts sometimes, but always continued—to recur to and resume those national principles to which they attribute the greatness and glory of the country.

"The Liberal party cannot complain that they have not had fair play. Never had a political party such advantages, never such opportunities. They are still in power; they have been for a long period in power. And yet what is the result? I speak not, I am sure, the language of exaggeration when I say that they are viewed by the community with distrust and, I might even say, with repugnance. And now, what is the present prospect of the national party? I have ventured to say that in my opinion Liberalism, from its essential elements, notwithstanding all the energy and ability with which its tenets have been advocated by its friends—notwithstanding the advantage which has accrued to them, as I will confess, from all the mistakes of their opponents—is viewed by the country with distrust. Now, in what light is the party

of which we are members viewed by the country, and what relation does public opinion bear to *our* opinions and *our* policy? That appears to me to be an instructive query; and on an occasion like the present it is as well that we should enter into its investigation as pay mutual compliments to each other, which may in the end perhaps prove fallacious."

The Tory party, he proceeded, had three great objects. The first was to maintain the institutions of the country—not from any sentiment of political superstition, but because it believed that they embodied the principles upon which a community like England could alone safely rest. The principles of liberty, of order, of law, and of religion ought not to be intrusted to individual opinion or to the caprice and passion of multitudes, but should be embodied in a form of permanence and power. Toryism associated with the monarchy the ideas which it represented—the majesty of law, the administration of justice, the fountain of mercy and of honour. It knew that in the estates of the realm and the privileges they enjoyed was the best security for public liberty and good government. It believed that a national profession of faith could only be maintained by an established church, and that no society was safe unless there was a public recognition of the Providential government of the world, and of the future responsibility of man. Yet it was a curious circumstance that, during all those same forty years of triumphant Liberalism, every one of those institutions had been continuously attacked and assailed. And what had been the result? For the last forty years the most depreciating comparisons had been instituted between the sovereignty of England and the sovereignty of a great republic. The country had been called upon in every way, in parliament, in the press, by articles in newspapers, by pamphlets, by every means which could influence opinion, to contrast the simplicity and economy of the sovereignty of the United States with the cumbrous cost of

the sovereignty of England. And what had been the answer of the country? The people of England had expressed, in a manner which could not be mistaken, that they would uphold the ancient monarchy of England, the constitutional monarchy of England, limited by the co-ordinate authority of the estates of the realm, but limited by nothing else. So far as those institutions of the country—the monarchy and the lords spiritual and temporal—were concerned, public opinion was in favour of those institutions, the maintenance of which was one of the principal tenets of the Tory party, and the existence of which had been unceasingly criticised for forty years by the Liberal party.

"Now, let me say," he continued, "a word about the other estate of the realm, which was first attacked by Liberalism. One of the most distinguishing features of the great change effected in 1832 was, that those who brought it about at once abolished all the franchises of the working classes. They were franchises as ancient as those of the baronage of England; and, while they abolished them, they proposed no substitute. The discontent upon the subject of the representation which has from that time more or less pervaded our society dates from that period, and that discontent, all will admit, has now ceased. It was terminated by the Act of parliamentary reform of 1867–68. That Act was founded on a confidence that the great body of the people of this country were 'Conservative.' When I say 'Conservative,' I use the word in its purest and loftiest sense. I mean that the people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belonging to a great country, and wish to maintain its greatness—that they are proud of belonging to an imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their empire—that they believe, on the whole, that the greatness and the empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land.

"Gentlemen, I venture to express my

opinion, long entertained, and which has never for a moment faltered, that this is the disposition of the great mass of the people; and I am not misled for a moment by wild expressions and eccentric conduct which may occur in the metropolis of this country. There are people who may be, or who at least affect to be working men, and who, no doubt, have a certain influence with a certain portion of the metropolitan working classes, who talk Jacobinism. But, gentlemen, that is no novelty. That is not the consequence of recent legislation, or of any political legislation that has occurred in this century. There always has been a Jacobinical section in the city of London. I don't particularly refer to that most distinguished and affluent portion of the metropolis which is ruled by my right hon. friend the lord mayor. Mr. Pitt complained of and suffered by it. There has always been a certain portion of the working class in London who have sympathized—perverse as we may deem the taste—with the Jacobin feelings of Paris. Well, gentlemen, we all know now, after eighty years' experience, in what the Jacobinism of Paris has ended, and I hope I am not too sanguine when I express my conviction that the Jacobinism of London will find a very different result.

"I say with confidence that the great body of the working classes of England utterly repudiate such sentiments. They have no sympathy with them. They are English to the core. They repudiate cosmopolitan principles. They adhere to national principles. They are for maintaining the greatness of the kingdom and the empire, and they are proud of being subjects of our sovereign and members of such an empire. Well, then, as regards the political institutions of this country, the maintenance of which is one of the chief tenets of the Tory party, so far as I can read public opinion, the feeling of the nation is in accordance with the Tory party. It was not always so. There was a time when the institutions of this country

were decried. They have passed through a scathing criticism of forty years; they have passed through that criticism when their political upholders have, generally speaking, been always in opposition. They have been upheld by us when we were unable to exercise any of the lures of power to attract force to us, and the people of this country have arrived at these conclusions from their own thought and their own experience."

He then repeated what he had before said at Manchester as to the established church. No institution of England, since the advent of Liberalism, had been so systematically assailed as the established church. They were first told that the church was asleep; and it was very possible, as everybody, civil and spiritual, was asleep forty years ago, that that might have been the case. Now they were told that the church was too active, and that it would be destroyed by its internal restlessness and energy. He saw in all those efforts of the church to represent every mood of the spiritual mind of man, no evidence that it would fall, no proof that any fatal disruption was at hand. He saw in the church an immense effort to rise to national feelings and recur to national principles. The Church of England, like all their institutions, felt it must be national, and it knew that, to be national, it must be comprehensive.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Disraeli, "there is another and second great object of the Tory party. If the first is to maintain the institutions of the country, the second is, in my opinion, to uphold the empire of England. If you look to the history of this country since the advent of Liberalism—forty years ago—you will find that there has been no effort so continuous, so subtle, supported by so much energy, and carried on with so much ability and acumen, as the attempts of Liberalism to *effect the disintegration* of the empire of England. And of all its efforts, this is the one which has been the nearest to success. Statesmen of the highest character, writers of the most dis-

tinguished ability, the most organized and efficient means, have been employed in this endeavour. It has been proved to all of us that we have lost money by our colonies. It has been shown with precise, with mathematical demonstration, that there never was a jewel in the crown of England that was so truly costly as the possession of India. How often has it been suggested that we should at once emancipate ourselves from this incubus! Well, that result was nearly accomplished. When those subtle views were adopted by the country under the plausible plea of granting self-government to the colonies, I confess that I myself thought that the tie was broken. Not that I for one object to self-government. I cannot conceive how our distant colonies can have their affairs administered except by self-government. But self-government, in my opinion, when it was conceded, ought to have been conceded as part of a great *policy of imperial consolidation. It ought to have been accompanied by an imperial tariff, by securities for the people of England for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belonged to the sovereign as their trustee, and by a military code which should have precisely defined the means and the responsibilities by which the colonies should be defended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the colonies themselves.* It ought, further, to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the metropolis, which would have brought the colonies into constant and continuous relations with the home government. All this, however, was omitted because those who advised that policy—and I believe their convictions were sincere—looked upon the colonies of England, looked even upon our connection with India, as a burden upon this country, viewing everything in a financial aspect, and totally passing by those moral and political considerations which make nations great, and by the influence of which alone men are distinguished from animals.

"Yet what had been the result of that

attempt during the reign of Liberalism for the disintegration of the empire? It had entirely failed. But how had it failed? Through the sympathy of the colonies with the mother country. They had decided that the empire should not be destroyed, and no minister in England would do his duty who neglected any opportunity of reconstructing as much as possible the colonial empire, and of responding to those distant sympathies which might become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to the hand.

"Gentlemen, another great object of the Tory party, and one not inferior to the maintenance of the empire, or the upholding of our institutions, is the elevation of the condition of the people. Let us see in this great struggle between Toryism and Liberalism that has prevailed in this country during the last forty years, what are the salient features. It must be obvious to all who consider the condition of the multitude with a desire to improve and elevate it, that no important step can be gained unless you can effect some reduction of their hours of labour and humanize their toil. The great problem is to be able to achieve such results without violating those principles of economic truth upon which the prosperity of all states depends. You recollect well that many years ago the Tory party believed that these two results might be obtained—that you might elevate the condition of the people by the reduction of their toil and the mitigation of their labour, and at the same time inflict no injury on the wealth of the nation. You know how that effort was encountered, how these views and principles were met by the triumphant statesmen of Liberalism. They told you that the inevitable consequence of our policy was to diminish capital, that this, again, would lead to the lowering of wages, to a great diminution of the employment of the people, and ultimately to the impoverishment of the kingdom.

"These were not merely the opinions of ministers of state, but those of the

most blatant and loud-mouthed leaders of the Liberal party. And what has been the result? Those measures were carried, but carried, as I can bear witness, with great difficulty and after much labour and a long struggle. Yet they were carried; and what do we now find? That capital was never accumulated so quickly, that wages were never higher, that the employment of the people was never greater, and the country never wealthier. I ventured to say a short time ago, speaking in one of the great cities of this country, that the health of the people was the most important question for a statesman. It is, gentlemen, a large subject. It has many branches. It involves the state of the dwellings of the people, the moral consequences of which are not less considerable than the physical. It involves their enjoyment of some of the chief elements of nature—air, light, and water. It involves the regulation of their industry, the inspection of their toil. It involves the purity of their provisions, and it touches upon all the means by which you may wean them from habits of excess and of brutality. Now, what is the feeling upon these subjects of the Liberal party—that Liberal party who opposed the Tory party when, even in their weakness, they advocated a diminution of the toil of the people, and introduced and supported those Factory laws, the principles of which they extended, in the brief period when they possessed power, to every other trade in the country? What is the opinion of the great Liberal party—the party that seeks to substitute cosmopolitan for national principles in the government of this country—on this subject? Why, the views which I expressed in the great capital of the county of Lancaster have been held up to derision by the Liberal press. A leading member—a very rising member, at least, among the new Liberal members—denounced them the other day as the ‘policy of sewage.’

“Well, it may be the ‘policy of sewage’ to a Liberal member of parliament. But to one of the labouring multitude of England,

who has found fever always to be one of the inmates of his household—who has, year after year, seen stricken down the children of his loins, on whose sympathy and material support he has looked with hope and confidence, it is not a ‘policy of sewage,’ but a question of life and death. And I can tell you this, gentlemen, from personal conversation with some of the most intelligent of the labouring class (and I think there are many of them in this room who can bear witness to what I say), that the policy of the Tory party—the hereditary, the traditional policy of the Tory party, that would improve the condition of the people—is more appreciated by the people than the ineffable mysteries and all the pains and penalties of the ballot bill. Gentlemen, is that wonderful? Consider the condition of the great body of the working classes of this country. They are in possession of personal privileges—of personal rights and liberties—which are not enjoyed by the aristocracies of other countries. Recently they have obtained—and wisely obtained—a great extension of political rights; and when the people of England see that under the constitution of this country, by means of the constitutional cause which my right honourable friend the lord mayor has proposed, they possess every personal right of freedom, and according to the conviction of the whole country, also an adequate concession of political rights, is it at all wonderful that they should wish to elevate and improve their condition? and is it unreasonable that they should ask the legislature to assist them in that behest as far as it is consistent with the general welfare of the realm?

“Why, the people of England would be greater idiots than the Jacobinical leaders of London even suppose, if, with their experience and acuteness, they should not long have seen that the time had arrived *when social, and not political improvement, is the object which they ought to pursue.* I have touched, gentlemen, on the three great objects of the Tory party. I told you I would try

to ascertain what was the position of the Tory party with reference to the country now. I have told you also with frankness what I believe the position of the Liberal party to be. Notwithstanding their position, I believe they are viewed by the country with mistrust and repugnance. But on all the three great objects which are sought by Toryism—the maintenance of our institutions, the preservation of our empire, and the improvement of the condition of the people—I find a rising opinion in the country sympathizing with our tenets, and prepared, I believe, if the opportunity offers, to uphold them until they prevail."

Mr. Disraeli then made special reference to the representatives of the Conservative associations before him. "Before sitting down," he said, "I would make one remark particularly applicable to those whom I am now addressing. This is a numerous assembly; this is an assembly individually influential; but it is not on account of its numbers, it is not on account of its individual influence, that I find it to me deeply interesting. It is because I know that I am addressing a representative assembly. It is because I know that there are men here who come from all districts and all quarters of England, who represent classes and powerful societies, and who meet here not merely for the pleasure of a festival, but because they believe that our assembling together may lead to national advantage. Yes, I tell all who are here present that there is a responsibility which you have incurred to-day, and which you must meet like men. When you return to your homes, when you return to your counties and to your cities, you must tell to all those whom you can influence that the time is at hand, that at least it cannot be far distant, when England will have to decide between national and cosmopolitan principles. The issue is not a mean one. It is whether you will be content to be a comfortable England, modelled and moulded upon continental principles and meeting in due course an inevitable fate, or whether

you will be a great country—an imperial country—a country where your sons, when they rise, rise to paramount positions, and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world.

"Upon you depends the issue. Whatever may be the general feeling, you must remember that in fighting against Liberalism or the continental system you are fighting against those who have the advantage of power—against those who have been in high places for nearly half a century. You have nothing to trust to but your own energy and the sublime instinct of an ancient people. You must act as if everything depended on your individual efforts. The secret of success is constancy of purpose. Go to your homes, and teach there these truths, which will soon be imprinted on the conscience of the land. Make each man feel how much rests on his own exertions. The highest, like my noble friend the chairman, may lend us his great aid. But rest assured that the assistance of the humblest is not less efficient. Act in this spirit, and you will succeed. You will maintain your country in its present position. But you will do more than that—you will deliver to your posterity a land of liberty, of prosperity, of power, and of glory."

The uneventful session came to an end, August 10, 1872. There had been very little to record, and still less for history to remember with any pride or satisfaction. With the exception of the Ballot Act, no measure of any note had become law. The arbitrators were busy at Geneva deciding the *Alabama* claims, and the result of their ruling was that with regard to the two privateers, the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, Great Britain had been guilty of not carrying out the provisions of the treaty; but with regard to the conduct of the other privateers she was not to blame. To settle all claims the arbitrators mulcted England of some three millions—a settlement of the dispute to which Sir Alexander Cockburn,

who was the arbitrator for England, strongly objected. Another dispute was also decided against us. The right to the possession of the island of San Juan had been referred to the arbitration of the Emperor of Germany, and the result of the investigation had been that the island was awarded to the United States. The government were so enamoured with the system of arbitration—and when it is known that a nation will not engage in hostilities under any provocation, it is a

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curious coincidence that arbitration always decides against her—that it was fortunate that Germany then preferred no claim to Heligoland, or Spain to Gibraltar, or Italy to Malta, or Russia to India, or the United States to the West Indies, or any power, in fact, to our wealth or possessions, else the desires of such amongst us who wish our country to be a mere group of islands in a northern sea, and not an empire, might perhaps have been fully gratified.

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CHAPTER IX.

A CHECK.

MR. GLADSTONE had been so encouraged by the success which had attended upon the carrying out of his "Irish ideas" that he resolved once more to court the favours of fortune. He had interfered with the ecclesiastical system of Ireland, he had interfered with its land system, he was now to interfere with its educational system. A humorous cartoon represented the political situation. Over a wild course Mr. Gladstone, dressed as a jockey, was seen sending a powerful steeple-chaser, ticketed "Liberal Majority," at a stiff stone wall, on which was written "Irish University Bill;" in the background were two big jumps, labelled "Irish Land Bill" and "Irish Church Bill," which had just been successfully taken. The question asked by the caricature was, "Would he clear it?" The history of the session of 1873 is chiefly occupied with the answer to this query.

The Houses re-assembled the first week in February, and among the most important paragraphs in the speech from the throne was the following:—"A measure will be submitted to you on an early day for settling the question of university education in Ireland. It will have for its object the advancement of learning in that portion of my dominions, and will be framed with a careful regard to the rights of conscience." The condition of university education in Ireland was somewhat curious. There were the University of Dublin, represented by Trinity College, which was the *alma mater* of the Protestant party, and the Queen's University (consisting of the colleges at Belfast, Cork, and Galway), which was established on a strictly secular basis. Thus to the Irish Papist the advantages of a university education in his own land

were practically denied. As a Roman Catholic he was refused permission to enter himself on the books of Trinity College, Dublin, and as a conscientious Roman Catholic he could not take part in a system of education, as at the Queen's University, which was wholly and purely secular. What the Irish Papist wanted, and what the Irish hierarchy and clergy had frequently agitated for, was a chartered university especially devoted to the instruction of Roman Catholics; but this request successive governments had refused, on the grounds that such an institution would tend to lower the national standard of education, and that it was unadvisable to endow a sectarian establishment out of the public funds.

To meet the difficulty and settle, as he called it, the "last social and religious grievance" of Ireland, Mr. Gladstone brought forward a scheme of university education which he hoped would satisfy both the prejudices of the Protestant and the exclusiveness of the Papist. Stated briefly it was as follows. The University of Dublin was to be the one central university of the country, to which were to be affiliated Trinity College, the colleges of Cork and Belfast, and the unchartered Roman Catholic University. The Queen's College at Galway, since it had failed to attract an adequate number of students, was to be abolished. The University of Dublin, unlike that of London, was not to be a mere examining board, but a real university, with professorships, fellowships, and the due appliances of lecture-rooms. In order, however, to avoid disputed topics, no chairs for theology, moral philosophy, or modern history were to be founded. The theo-

logical faculty was to be taken away from Trinity College, and placed in the hands of the representative body of the Irish dis-established church. The government of the new university was to be vested, in the first instance, in a council of twenty-eight persons not yet selected, but to be afterwards named in the bill; further vacancies were to be filled up by the crown for a certain number of years, and afterwards by a mixed system of co-optation and election, in which the preponderating power would ultimately devolve on the affiliated colleges. To support this university Trinity College was annually to contribute £12,000, whilst the remaining revenues were to arise from a charge on the consolidated fund of £10,000 a year. Trinity College, and each of the other affiliated colleges, were to be allowed to draw up schemes for their own government.

Such were the main provisions of the much-talked-of Irish University Bill. "The fabric which we seek to raise," concluded Mr. Gladstone in laying his measure before parliament, "is a substantive, organized system, under which all the sons of Ireland, be their professions, be their opinions what they may, may freely meet in their own ancient, noble, historic university for the advancement of learning in that country.* The removal of grievance is the negative portion of the project; the substantive and positive part of it academic reform. We do not ask the House to embark upon a scheme which can be described as one of mere innovation. We ask you now to give to Ireland that which has been long desired, which has been often attempted, but which has never been attained; and we ask you to give it to Ireland in founding yourselves upon the principles on which you have already acted in the universities of England. We commit the plan to the prudence and the patriotism of this House, which we have so often experienced, and in which the

country places, as we well know, an entire confidence. I will not lay stress upon the evils which will flow from its failure, from its rejection, in prolonging and embittering the controversies which have for many, for too many years, been suffered to exist. I would rather dwell upon a more pleasing prospect—upon my hope, even upon my belief, that this plan in its essential features may meet with the approval of the House and of the country. At any rate, I am convinced that if it be your pleasure to adopt it, you will by its means enable Irishmen to raise their country to a height in the sphere of human culture such as will be worthy of the genius of the people, and such as may perhaps emulate those oldest and possibly best traditions of her history, upon which Ireland still so fondly dwells."

The measure at once encountered a violent and unanimous hostility. Like the other "Irish ideas" of Mr. Gladstone, it was an unsatisfactory compromise, and failed to please any one party. As the Irish Church Bill had irritated the Protestant without gratifying the Papist, as the Irish Land Bill had mortified the landlord and yet had not satisfied the peasant, so this Irish University Bill alienated the Protestant party without pleasing the Papists. It was opposed by the Roman Catholic prelates, by many of the English and Scotch Liberals, by the entire Anglican party, and by the Protestant Nonconformists. It was a measure which had been drawn up to catch every vote, and had failed to command a single one. No sooner was it laid before the House than objection after objection against the aims and provisions of the bill sounded throughout the chamber. One of the first points raised was that the names of the members who were to form the council had not been inserted in the bill. Who were they to be? it was asked. It had been admitted by Mr. Gladstone that upon the ordinary members of the council the success or failure of the whole scheme depended, and that those members were to be the

* Mr. Gladstone sketched with much erudition the history of the University of Dublin, and showed that, according to the original design of the founders, there were to be other colleges besides Trinity in the University of Dublin.

"main strength and force" of the governing body. They were to appoint professors, adjudge prizes and emoluments, affiliate colleges, and exclude and include both subjects and persons. In short, the council was to be all-powerful, and yet the House, it was indignantly cried, was not to know the names of those to whom such absolute authority was to be intrusted! Again, it was asked, how was this council to be composed? Was it to be sectarian or partly sectarian and partly unsectarian, or wholly educational, or partly sectarian and partly educational? "Was it fair," members cried, "to ask the House to adopt a measure the whole future consequence of which depended on the composition of the council which it would bring into existence? Was it fair to ask the House to constitute a tribunal of unknown persons, and arm them with gigantic power? Was it right to ask the House to perform a work without knowing the character of the work which it was asked to do, but for which it would be held responsible for all time? Was it equitable to ask the House to set its hand and seal to a deed of which it ignored the contents? It was not."

Then it was alleged that though the bill pretended to extend the powers of the University of Dublin, it really extinguished them. What the measure did was to substitute for Dublin University a new university composed of different materials, and governed by a council whose composition and character were as yet unknown. Why should Dublin University, which had handed on the torch of learning since the days of Elizabeth, be abolished? "Who are some of the men," asked Mr. Gathorne Hardy, "who have been brought up in this great university? She was the *alma mater* of Burke, greatest of philosophic statesmen; of men of letters like Goldsmith and Swift; of orators like Grattan and Shiel; of divines like Archer, Butler, and O'Brien; of mathematicians like MacCullagh and Hamilton; of physicists like Robinson and Rosse; of chancellors like Plunket or

Cairns. She has acquired an indefeasible title to the veneration and love of Irish citizens. Modern English judges might have been added to the list; and on the Irish bench sit men of different creeds who have been trained under her care and competed for her honours. It is this institution which you are called on to destroy." There was no need, it was contended, for the establishment of any new university, for in the universities already in existence there had been no proved incompetency; nor were those universities themselves, if reform were desired, unwilling to extend their doors, to improve their means of education, and carry into effect all changes deemed necessary.

The bill, it was said, was not introduced to meet an educational want, for no one denied that education in Dublin College and the Queen's Colleges had reached a high standard; but it was introduced to please the Roman Catholic prelates. Yet the Irish hierarchy would be no more content with the new university than they had been content with the Queen's Colleges, for the new university was after all only a larger Queen's university. "Who asks for this bill?" cried Mr. Horsman with his caustic bluntness. "Who accepts it? Who is benefited by it? It pleases nobody. It settles nothing. It unsettles everything and everybody. The Protestants do not want it; they have no grievance; they ask for nothing except to be left alone. Their only grievance has been created by this bill. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, all tell you they are satisfied with the present state of things. It is working well and doing good, and there is nothing they complain of except your own foolish and mischievous disturbance. Nobody in Ireland wanted the bill. No Liberal wanted it, for the whole Liberal party with one consent have been shaking in their shoes ever since the measure was brought in. No Conservative wanted it. The Roman Catholic prelates refuse a

compromise, and have cursed the bill unanimously and altogether. Then, since no one wants it, withdraw the bill; for it has hitherto been a rule in legislation that there shall be no great disturbance of the existing state of things, unless the change is asked for by some class of the community and benefits some class." This suggestion, however, Mr. Gladstone refused to accept; on introducing his scheme he had declared that he would stand or fall by the bill, and he would calmly abide the result of the division.

On the second reading Mr. Bourke moved the following amendment:—"That this House, while ready to assist Her Majesty's government in passing a measure 'for the advancement of learning in Ireland,' regrets that Her Majesty's government, previously to inviting the House to read this bill a second time, have not felt it to be their duty to state to the House the names of the twenty-eight persons who it is proposed shall at first constitute the ordinary members of the council." Mr. Disraeli spoke in favour of the amendment, and his speech decided the fate of the bill.

He begged the House (March 11, 1873) to ascertain what was the real issue of the measure before it. So many remarks had been made that it was difficult to know what was in the bill and what was not. Mr. Vernon Harcourt, he remarked, had asserted that the "gagging clauses" (those clauses which placed a stigma upon the study of philosophy and modern history) were dead. Mr. Cardwell had said that every point of controversy in regard to the bill had been surrendered. Others had offered similar statements. Yet Mr. Gladstone had not corroborated such assertions; all that the prime minister had said was that every disputed point would be fully discussed in committee. Of course, if the House went into committee, all those points would be fully discussed. What on earth else, inquired Mr. Disraeli, did they go into committee for but to discuss them? Therefore, as there was no proof before

him that the government had relinquished a single clause in the bill, he had no alternative but to examine the details of the measure as they had been originally brought forward.

"Under these circumstances," he proceeded, "I must consider the bill as it has been presented by the right honourable gentleman [Mr. Gladstone], and as it has been explained in the speech in which he introduced it. Sir, I will consider the measure first upon its merits. I will not now inquire what are the causes of its introduction into the House, or what may be the consequences of the measure if it is passed. I think the fairest and most proper mode is to consider it first on its merits. I object to the bill for many reasons, and I object to it first because it is a proposition to institute *a university which is not universal*. Now, I do not pretend for a moment to say that I expected the new University of Dublin should teach everything, nor am I sure that it would be easy to fix upon any university, ancient, modern, or mediæval, which did fulfil that condition. But this I say with some confidence, even to the right hon. gentleman, whose academic knowledge is so great—that there is no instance, at least none with which I am acquainted, in mediæval or modern times, of any attempt to establish a university for the study of the faculty of arts, the most generous of all the faculties, where there has been simultaneously a proposition to emasculate that faculty and to mutilate that generous study.

"Of that I believe there is no instance. And in arguing this case I must virtually consider that the proposition for the new University of Dublin is a proposition for an institution founded mainly to enter into the studies comprehended in the faculty of arts. No doubt there are other faculties that will be connected with the university when established; but after the speech of the right hon. gentleman, and after the manner in which he dilated on that particular faculty, I assume—indeed, the right

hon. gentleman admitted it himself—that it was to secure a faculty of arts for the people of Ireland that this great institution was to be established. Well, I say there is no instance whatever of a proposition to institute a university founded mainly for the study of the faculty of arts, where at the same time *it was proposed to mutilate that faculty, and interdict the study of some of its most important branches.*

“But before I touch on that part of the subject, in order to prevent any confusion, I would remind the House of an important provision in this bill which has been very slightly touched upon in the course of the debate, and which cannot be considered under the head of the faculty of arts, and that is the proposition to transfer the faculty of divinity from Dublin University to another body. Now, in the first place I doubt—I more than doubt—the power to transfer a faculty in this country. A faculty in foreign universities is a corporate body, and you can transfer a corporate body. There are instances in foreign universities in which a faculty has been transferred from a university in one part of Germany to a university in another part, and with that faculty would of course have been transferred its property; but a faculty in an English university—and Dublin University follows the system of the English universities—is not incorporated.

“A faculty, as I understand, is not incorporated in the University of Dublin. This is not a mere technical objection—it is not a mere affair of words. What will happen in this case? First of all, instead of transferring the faculty to the new body called the Irish Church body, you must legally destroy the faculty of divinity in Dublin University. You must then create a faculty of divinity in the Irish Church body, and you must confiscate the property of the old faculty of divinity, and finally you may transfer that property to the Irish Church body. But the House will see this is a very strange and violent proceeding. It is not at all to be effected by the bill which is

now before us. And this leads me to ask the House to consider this point—What is the necessity of depriving Dublin of its ancient and famous faculty of divinity? I can easily conceive that in olden days, when the university was founded on tests—and so far as Trinity College is concerned it is virtually free from tests, for it is not the fault of Trinity College that it is not emancipated from them—I can easily conceive that in the olden days of tests, and when there was a faculty of divinity with compulsory attendance, there might have been an overwhelming majority in the House who, if it had the opportunity, would have abolished such a faculty. But that is no longer the case; and if the university is to be open to all, without compulsory attendance, why, I ask, is this faculty of divinity, which has been so long a brilliant, a successful, and a famous faculty, to be abolished?

“There is another point connected with this, also of much importance. The faculty of divinity in Dublin has the high privilege of conferring degrees: does the right hon. gentleman propose by this bill, if he succeeds in the previous part of his operation, to transfer the privilege of conferring degrees in divinity to the Irish Church body? That ought to be answered. If he does not, the Protestant Episcopal population of Ireland will be placed in this remarkable position, that there will be no power in Ireland to confer a degree in divinity. That is a matter for consideration. But perhaps the right hon. gentleman will say it is his intention that the Irish Church body, to whom the faculty is to be transferred, should have the power of conferring degrees in divinity. I should like to know from the right hon. gentleman whether that is his intention. Perhaps he will say that the sixteenth clause provides for this. Now, when I look at the sixteenth clause, I find that religious bodies in Ireland shall have the power of conferring degrees. Now, is that a serious provision, or is it not? Are we to understand that the mumpers and jumpers are all to have the power of

conferring degrees? *This clause is to transfer to religious bodies the power of conferring degrees.* It is an extraordinary proposition. I remember a few years ago there was a sect peculiar to Ireland called the White Quakers. They had a grievance, and they communicated frequently with me upon it. I did not clearly see it, and I did not bring it before the House. I had a becoming prescience, for if I had taken up their case they might have conferred a degree upon me.*

"I think this a monstrous proposition—to abolish the theological faculty of a university like Dublin, to transfer the privilege of conferring degrees in divinity, I will not say to an unknown, but certainly to an untried body, however respectable, and by virtue of a clause—if the clause has that virtue, which I doubt—which permits any religious body in Ireland to confer a degree. To confer a degree is a prerogative of the crown, and it ought to be one of the most precious prerogatives of the crown. I thought we were living in times in which we were so shaping our course and taking such means, that a period had arrived when a degree would be highly valued, and the delegation of such a prerogative by the crown would be considered by any corporate body one of the greatest honours and privileges. It does not appear so from the conduct of Her Majesty's government. Look at this clause—it is a short one; it will be found it is only a saving clause; and I doubt very much whether under that clause such a privilege can be exercised. In what a position you place the whole population of Ireland connected with the Anglican Church if, when the bill is passed, there be no power in Ireland to confer a degree in divinity! This point has not as yet been brought out in discussion,

* Early in the nineteenth century a sect called the White Quakers created some commotion in Ireland. They appeared in the streets dressed in white, and went about indoors in a state of nudity, in imitation of our first parents in their condition of innocence. They made a profession of continency, and condemned marriage because it was not known in paradise, of which they considered their sect an emblem, and themselves imitators of Adam and Eve.

and it seems to me to be one of much importance. I find there are prejudices on the subject in many quarters, but I must express my great regret that in the new university the right hon. gentleman has not proposed a faculty of theology. I do so upon this ground—whatever may be your arrangements, I do not think you will be able to prevent the study of theology to a certain degree in any university, and hence you will find yourselves in a position of embarrassment.

"Recently," continued Mr. Disraeli, "I was looking over a programme of lectures on Oriental literature, about to be given next term in the University of Cambridge. I have no doubt that many gentlemen have perused with interest the same programme. Lectures are to be given by most eminent men in Sanskrit, in Hindustanee, in Hebrew, and in Arabic. I remember the lectures of the professor of Arabic are to be upon the Koran; he is to give a series of lectures to undergraduates at Cambridge on the Koran. There is nothing in this bill to prevent a professor of Arabic in the new university giving a series of lectures on the Koran; there is nothing to prevent him giving a series of lectures on Buddhism, on the religion of the Vedas, or on that of Zoroaster. If professors are competent to lecture with ability on such subjects, we all know what a spell they can exercise over their audiences. Their enthusiasm and erudition, and the mystical element connected with such studies, make a combination which has an entrancing effect on youthful students. Their lectures will be attended, but by whom? By youths who are not educated in the religion and theology of their own country. A professor may not contrast Christianity with Buddhism or with the Koran, and so you bring about a state of things in which the youth of that university are acquainted with the dogmas of every religion except their own. This is a preposterous proposition, and it shows you are entering upon an unnatural course when you begin in a university by

destroying the sources of knowledge. *A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning. It is a place for the cultivation of the intellect, for invention, for research; it is not a place where you should expect to find interdiction of studies, some of them the most interesting that can occupy the mind of man.*

"Now, sir, though I will treat it very briefly, I must say something about the extraordinary clauses that attempt to interdict the public study of some of the greatest subjects which hitherto have engaged the intellect of men, and which clauses, we have been told, but not on sufficient authority, have been withdrawn from the bill. If I had the slightest information that they would be withdrawn, I should only be too glad not to touch upon them. I must press upon the House that we have had no satisfactory evidence of the kind. We must remember we are embarked upon the discussion of one of the most unfortunate measures that could be brought before the consideration of parliament — important, not so much for the specific object which appears to be the ultimate result of this measure, if it be passed, but because of the great principles which are involved in many propositions which are contained in this bill. I treat the proposition to omit from a new university—founded, above all things, for the study of the faculty of arts—the study of philosophy, as one of the most astounding that could have been made; and that it should have been made by a British minister in the House of Commons, of all places, and by the minister who is the leader of the Liberal party, does indeed astonish me."

He had always considered, continued Mr. Disraeli, that some knowledge of the laws which regulated the mind, and of the principles of morality, made the best foundation for general study. But if ever there was a period in which a minister founding a new university should hesitate before he discouraged the study of metaphysics and ethics, it was the age in which they then

lived. That was essentially a material age. The opinions which were then afloat, which had often been afloat before, and which had died away, were opposed to all those convictions which the proper study of moral and mental philosophy had long established. And that such a proposition should be made with respect to a university which had produced Berkeley and Hutchison made it still more surprising. They lived in an age when young men prattled about protoplasm, and when young ladies in gilded saloons unconsciously talked atheism. Yet that was a moment when a minister, called upon to fulfil one of the noblest duties which could fall upon the most ambitious statesman — namely, the formation of a great university — formally came forward and proposed the omission from public study of that philosophy which vindicated the spiritual nature of man. Mr. Gladstone might perhaps say that he had not abolished the study of philosophy, either mental or moral, for all who attended the projected university might prosecute that study. They might, but they would not. The fact was that all the encouragement was given to other studies. Those studies were abstruse, and they would naturally find that when the honours and the emoluments were given to other studies, those which were abstruse and difficult would not be pursued.

"What I want to impress on the House," said Mr. Disraeli, "is that this monstrous proposition, while it will do a great deal of harm, will not even effect its purpose. How can you prevent lectures on philosophy? For instance, suppose the Latin professor wants to give a series of lectures, as the Arabic professor may on the Koran, it is very natural that he should give lectures on Lucretius. Indeed, at this moment it is a probable circumstance. The waning reputation of English scholarship has lately been vindicated by an admirable edition of Lucretius, which does honour to Cambridge, and is worthy of the days of Bentley. I refer to the edition of Lucretius by Professor Munro. Now an accomplished professor

in the new Dublin University might take Munro's "Lucretius," and give lectures on that work. What becomes of his students? They will soon find themselves involved in the atomic theory, and will have protoplasm enough if they read the work with the discrimination which under the lecturer's inspiring guidance of course they would.

"There is scarcely a theory of Darwin which may not find some illustration there, and the student may speculate on the origin of things and the nature of Providence; and what is the consequence? Why, in this university, once so celebrated for its moral and mental philosophy, the professor will be addressing a body of students totally unprepared by previous studies to bring into intellectual play the counteracting influences which any youth could do who had been properly schooled in the more modern, the advanced and improved, philosophy of the times in which we live, and in the mental discoveries which have been made in England and Germany. The student may be learned in the gardens of Epicurus, but everything that has been discovered by the great thinkers of our generation is to be entirely unknown to him. I need not pursue this subject further. How can a professor lecture on Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero without lecturing on philosophy? Is he always to be lecturing to a class of students unarmed and undisciplined in the profound and rich learning which is the boast of modern ages?"

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the omission of the study of modern history from the scheme. Mr. Gladstone, he said, might try to vindicate that omission, because modern history did not figure in the curriculum of the old universities. That, however, was no adequate excuse for a great university reformer, or for a statesman who was about to establish a *new* university. Even in their old universities, at least for the last forty years, they had been endeavouring to expand the curriculum. They had introduced new sciences; they had introduced the study of history; and

though it might not be found in the old curriculum, every one, he thought, would assume that if a new university were about to be founded the study of modern history would constitute a part of the faculty of arts. It was as extraordinary for Mr. Gladstone to fix on an age of material scepticism to abolish the chair of philosophy, as it was remarkable for him to determine not to have a chair of modern history at a period and in an age when the study of history had become a science, and when, indeed, there were many principles of historic criticism then accepted which were as certain as the propositions of Euclid.

"But the right hon. gentleman will, I think," Mr. Disraeli passed on to say, "find even in the study of history that his object is not attained, and that, directly and collaterally, there will be constant controversies in the university on historic matters, though there may be no professors to guide and enlighten the students. But, so far as I can read the bill, and it is the only point with reference to this part of the subject which I will now make, it is not merely the study of modern history which is forbidden. It seems to me that the professor of ancient history will also be involved in great peril. For instance, the mind of Europe, and I might say of America, has been formed by two of the smallest states that ever existed, and resembled each other in many particulars. Both were divided into tribes; both inhabited a very limited country, and not a very fertile one. Both have left us a literature of startling originality; and both on an Acropolis raised a most splendid temple. I can conceive the unfortunate professor in the new university, restricted in his choice on so many subjects, deprived of divine philosophy, not permitted to touch on the principles of ethics, looking around him at last with some feeling of relief, and fixing for his lecture upon the still teeming and inexhaustible theme of Athenian genius. He would do justice to the Athenian tribes—their eloquence, their poetry, their arts, and their patriotic exploits. But what if

the professor lecturing on ancient history were to attempt to do the same justice to the tribes of Israel? He could hardly deal thoroughly with Hebrew history without touching on the origin of the Christian Church, and then it would be in the power of a single one of his audience to threaten the professor, to menace him for the course he was pursuing, and to denounce him to the council, who, if they had a majority—and a majority of one would do—might deprive him of his chair, and his chair of a man venerable for his character and illustrious for his learning."

That objection brought Mr. Disraeli to the consideration of the council of the new university. The power of the council was, he said, to be unlimited and uncontrolled, and when the House considered that a majority of one could exercise a complete authority over the professors, the examinations, the lectures, and the books to be studied, he was of opinion that the exercise of such power was unadvisable. The council was to be composed of "eminent men of moderate opinions" to the number of twenty-eight. The Protestants would choose their representatives, the Roman Catholics theirs, and the result would be constant divisions. Dissensions must naturally arise from the party elements of which the council was composed. The Roman Catholics, who had an inexorable objection to united education, would, if the bill became law, make every effort to secure a Roman Catholic majority upon the council, and through that majority to obtain complete control over Irish university education. Nor could he, observed Mr. Disraeli, blame them for that course. The first duty of the Roman Catholics was to maintain their inexorable principle as they regarded it; the next was to make the most of the circumstances which they had to encounter; and those who thought that by saying that the Roman Catholics were opposed to the bill, and the Protestants were opposed to it, that therefore the measure must be a just one—those who thought expressing such platitudes

they were really offering unanswerable syllogisms to the House, only gave another proof that the affairs of man were not regulated and ruled by logic.

"Now, I would say one word," continued Mr. Disraeli, "upon the position of the Irish Roman Catholics, particularly in reference to this matter. They are no supporters of ours. They have never supported us, although, as far as I am concerned, I should express now what I have ever felt—my respect for an ancient race and an ancient faith. But I regret the position in which they find themselves. That position, however, is in a great degree owing to their own exertions. We have had many allusions in this debate to the conduct of the late government with respect to this subject. These allusions have been made in parliament before, but slightly and casually, and I have listened to them with a silent smile. I have always been of opinion, as a general rule, that there is no waste of time in life like that of making explanations. One effect of the imputations that have been made upon myself, and I think I may answer for my colleagues—not only upon this but upon other matters—has been to make us at least charitable to our immediate opponents; and they never hear from me taunts about their secret correspondence and communications with parties with whom they ought not to hold those communications, or as to the stories which are prevalent in this House, because I have not the smallest doubt that in their case they are as utterly false as they are in our own.

"Now, let me, as the direct subject is before us—as these were not casual observations about a policy framed to catch the Irish vote, or what was called by a high authority at the commencement of the debate, piscatorial efforts* to obtain Irish influence and support for the government—let me make one or two remarks upon the conduct of Her Majesty's late government

* It was Mr. Horsman who branded the "measures of conciliation" brought forward both by the Tory and Liberal governments to humour Ireland as "piscatorial efforts to catch the Irish vote."

with regard to this very question of Irish university education. Sir, the late Lord Derby was certainly not an enemy to a system of united education. He might be said to have been its creator, and among the great services to his country of that illustrious man I know none that were more glorious. He never flinched in his opinions on that subject. The matter of Irish education was brought before him shortly after the formation of the government of 1866. But by whom was it brought? It was brought before his consideration by men who possessed, and who justly possessed, the entire confidence of the Protestant Church and the Protestant University of Ireland. It was at their instance that his attention was first called to the matter.

"Let me remind the House—for though it is modern history I may be pardoned for referring to it—let me, I say, remind the House of the general system under which Ireland was governed a few years ago, a system, however, which had prevailed for a considerable time. It was a system which endeavoured, not equally, but at the same time gradually to assist, so far as religion and education were concerned, the various creeds and classes of that country. It had in its rude elements been introduced into Ireland a very considerable time back; but during the present century it had been gradually but completely developed, and it was called, or has been called of late years, concurrent endowment. I am not going to entrap the House into a discussion on the merits of concurrent endowment, for concurrent endowment is dead, and I will tell you in a few minutes who killed it. But this I will say of concurrent endowment, that it was at least a policy, and the policy of great statesmen. It was the policy of Pitt, of Grey, of Russell, of Peel, and of Palmerston. The Protestant Church of Ireland under that system had held its property, *of which, in my opinion, it has been unjustly and injuriously deprived.* The Roman Catholics had a magnificent and increasing collegiate establishment. The

Presbyterians had a *Regium Donum*, which I always was of opinion ought to have been doubled. So far as Lord Palmerston was concerned—and Lord Palmerston was always called the Protestant Premier—he had prepared, and had himself recommended in this House, to secure to the Roman Catholics their glebes.

"That policy is dead. But, when Lord Derby had to consider this question, he had to consider it under the influence of that policy. Devoted as he was to the cause of united education, it was his opinion, on the representations which were made to him by those who represented the Protestant Church, the Protestant College, and the Protestant University of Ireland, that the position of Roman Catholics with respect to university education was, I will not say 'scandalous,'* but one which demanded the consideration of statesmen. Propositions were made, and placed before him. It became our duty, according to our view of our duty, to place ourselves in communication with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. We thought that was the proper course to pursue—that it was better to attempt to bring about a satisfactory settlement, of which there appeared to be some probability, by such straightforward means rather than by dark and sinister intrigues. Two Roman Catholic prelates were delegated to this country to enter into communication with the government. Unfortunately when the time had arrived, power had left Lord Derby, and I was his unworthy representative. I did not think it my duty, or for the public service, to place myself in personal communication with those gentlemen; but two of my colleagues did me the honour of representing me and the government on that occasion—one of them eminent for his knowledge of Ireland and of the subject, the late Lord Mayo; and the other a man distinguished for his knowledge of human nature, the late lord privy seal (Lord Malmesbury). And I am bound to say that they repre-

* Mr. Lowe had said that the education at the Queen's Colleges was "scandalously bad."

sented to me—and I mention them as competent judges of the matter—that those negotiations were conducted by the Roman Catholic prelates with dignity and moderation. Sir, I may have been too sanguine; but there was a time when I believed that some settlement of this question, honourable and satisfactory to all classes, might have been made. I am bound to say that no offer of endowment was made by the government. I am still more bound to say that no offer of endowment was urged—although it might have been mentioned—by the Roman Catholic prelates. . . . It is unnecessary to dwell on these particulars. The right hon. gentleman [Mr. Gladstone] says I burnt my fingers on that occasion. I see no scars. The right honourable gentleman opposite was a pupil of Sir Robert Peel. He sat in the cabinet of Lord Palmerston, who was supposed to be a devoted votary of the policy of concurrent endowment. The right honourable gentleman suddenly—I impute no motive, that is quite unnecessary—but the right honourable gentleman suddenly changed his mind, and threw over the policy of concurrent endowment—mistaking the clamour of the Nonconformists for the voice of the nation. The Roman Catholics fell into the trap. *They forgot the cause of university education in the prospect of destroying the Protestant Church.* The right honourable gentleman succeeded in his object. He became prime minister of England. If he had been a little more patient, without throwing over concurrent endowment, he would perhaps have been prime minister as soon. The Roman Catholics had the satisfaction of destroying the Protestant Church—of disestablishing the Protestant Church. They had the satisfaction before the year was over of witnessing the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church at Rome. As certain as we are in this House, the policy that caused the one led to the other—was the consistent and continuous sentiment of a man who is entitled to the reverence of

Protestants—and that is Cardinal Cullen. For if there be one man in the world more than another to whom the fall of the Papacy is attributable, it is his Eminence. He was and has been the prime promoter in this country of the alliance between Liberalism and the Papacy. And now, sir, see what has occurred. The Roman Catholics, having reduced Ireland to a spiritual desert, are discontented and have a grievance; and they come to parliament in order that they may create for them a blooming garden of Eden.

"The prime minister," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, indulging in one of those personal attacks upon Mr. Gladstone which the House of Commons always loved, and which on this occasion was richly deserved, "the prime minister is no ordinary man. I am very glad that my sincere compliment has obtained for the right honourable gentleman the only cheer which his party have conferred upon him during this discussion. The right honourable gentleman had a substitute for the policy of concurrent endowment, which had been killed by the Roman Catholics themselves. The right honourable gentleman *substituted the policy of confiscation. You have had four years of it. You have despoiled churches. You have threatened every corporation and endowment in the country. You have examined into everybody's affairs. You have criticised every profession and vexed every trade. No one is certain of his property, and nobody knows what duties he may have to perform to-morrow.* This is the policy of confiscation as compared with that of concurrent endowment. The Irish Roman Catholic clergy were perfectly satisfied while you were despoiling the Irish Church. They looked not unwillingly upon the plunder of the Irish landlords, and they thought that the time had arrived when the great drama would be fulfilled, and the spirit of confiscation would descend upon the celebrated walls of Trinity College, would level them to the ground, and endow the university of Stephen's Green.

"I ventured to remark at the time when

the policy of the right honourable gentleman was introduced that confiscation was contagious. I believe that the people of this country have had enough of the policy of confiscation. From what I can see, the House of Commons elected to carry out that policy are beginning to experience some of the inconveniences of satiety; and if I am not mistaken, they will give some intimation to the government to-night that that is their opinion also. I conclude from what has passed, that we shall not be asked to divide upon the amendment of the honourable member for King's Lynn [Mr. Bourke]. Let me say on the part of the honourable member that the object of his motion has been much misunderstood, and misunderstood especially by the right honourable gentleman the prime minister. The right honourable gentleman is greatly mistaken if he supposes, in the first place, that his was a party motion. It is nothing of the kind. It was a spontaneous motion on the part of the honourable member, and had been adopted by him in consultation with only a few academic sympathizers, who I believe chiefly sit on the other side of the House, and has been brought forward simply because there seemed to him to be a strange apathy with regard to this question in this bewildered assembly, and because he thought that some discussion would make us understand the question more fully than we appeared at first to do.

"When the right honourable gentleman introduced this measure, after listening to his speech, I humbly requested three weeks in which to consider it—a period of time which did not appear to me to be unreasonable. That request the right honourable gentleman with great amiability refused. He told me that I was not to judge of the measure by his perhaps too lengthy address, because when the bill was placed in my hands, as it soon would be, I should find it of the simplest possible character. I think by this time the right honourable gentleman has discovered that my request was not unreasonable, and that the House of Com-

mons has discovered that three weeks was not too long a period in which to study a composition so peculiar and so complicated in its character.

"Although I was far from willing to make this question the basis of anything like a struggle of party—although, on the contrary, I have endeavoured to prevent such a struggle—I have been hindered in that endeavour by the right honourable gentleman himself. It is the right honourable gentleman himself who has introduced so much passion, and so much, I may almost say, personal struggle into this question. It was the right honourable gentleman who, as the first minister of the crown, in introducing a question of a nature somewhat abstruse, and which to the majority of the honourable members of this House must have been not easy to comprehend, commenced his harangue by saying—'I am introducing a measure upon which I intend to stake the existence of the government.' That was in my opinion an unwise and rather an arrogant declaration on the part of the right honourable gentleman. I have certainly known instances where ministers introducing into this House large measures which had been prepared with great care, and feeling for them as much solicitude as the right honourable gentleman does for this bill—I have certainly known instances where, after protracted debates, and when opinions appeared to be perhaps equally balanced in this House, ministers have felt themselves authorized, under such circumstances, to say that they were prepared to stake the existence of their government upon the question at issue.

"But, on the other hand, I do not recall an instance of any minister who, on an occasion similar to the present, prefaced a laborious exposition, which by its very length and nature showed that it dealt with a subject which only the transcendent powers of the right honourable gentleman could make clear and lucid to the House, by saying—'But I tell you, in the first place, that I stake the existence of the government upon

it.' I trust the right honourable gentleman has profited by the remarks which have been made in the course of this debate, and that he now feels that upon the occasion of introducing this measure his vein was somewhat intemperate. No one wishes to disturb the right honourable gentleman in his place. If the right honourable gentleman intends to carry out a great policy—that of confiscation—I wish at least that he shall not be able to say that he has not had a fair trial for that policy. I wish the House and the country fully to comprehend all the bearings of that policy of the right honourable gentleman. But, sir, although I have not wished to make this a party question, although I certainly have no wish to disturb the right honourable gentleman in his seat, although I have no communication with any section or with any party in this House—I may say, with any individual but my own immediate colleagues—I must do my duty when I am asked, 'Do you or do you not approve of this measure.' I must vote against a measure which I believe to be monstrous in its general conception, pernicious in many of its details, and utterly futile as a measure of practical legislation."

Throughout the debate Mr. Gladstone had no fears as to the result, for he patronized Mr. Bourke and assured him that the amendment would be negatived. To his astonishment, however, he found that when the House divided ministers were in a minority: the numbers being, for the second reading of the bill, 284; against it, 287.

As the prime minister had distinctly stated that the government would stand or fall by the measure, he had now no alternative but to fulfil his pledge. "I have to announce to the House," he said (March 13, 1873), "that in consequence of the division which took place at an early hour yesterday morning, Her Majesty's ministers have thought it their duty respectfully to tender to Her Majesty the resignation of the offices which they hold. Her Majesty has been graciously

pleased to accept those resignations." The House then adjourned for a few days, in order that the necessary arrangements consequent upon a ministerial resignation might be carried out. Mr. Disraeli was at once sent for, and commanded by the queen to form an administration. Owing to the political situation he, however, then deemed it his duty to decline the high honour placed upon him. In the House of Commons the Conservative party were in a minority; it was the aim of the Radicals to turn out a Liberal government, and in its stead to substitute a weak Conservative cabinet, which must in the course of things be soon overthrown; then the Radicals, conscious of their power, would reconstruct their own party on a new platform pledged to more extreme measures, and would possess a dominant influence in the Liberal government that would again be placed in office. These tactics Mr. Disraeli quickly saw through, and thought the country would be best served by his refusal of power. He admitted to Her Majesty that he was quite prepared to form an administration which would conduct the affairs of the country efficiently, but that he could not undertake such a duty in the present House of Commons. On the other hand, owing to the pressing state of public business, he could not conscientiously advise a dissolution; therefore, such being the case, he respectfully declined to form a government. This decision was disapproved of by the Liberals, who contended that no leader of the Opposition should thwart the policy of a government unless he was prepared himself to accept the responsibility of office. "My lords," said the Duke of Richmond, when explaining the situation to his peers, "the theory that the party of which Mr. Disraeli is the head ought to carry on the government, even though they are in a minority, is one of a very peculiar character, for it is perfectly evident that if it were carried out to its fullest extent the administration of public affairs in this country must come to a dead-lock. I believe

Mr. Disraeli has adopted the course which he ought to have taken, and that in future it will be said that the position he now occupies sheds additional lustre on his name as one of the greatest statesmen of the day."

The Liberal government was reconstructed, and again held the seals of office. Mr. Gladstone, in the brief statement he made to the House, felt that under the circumstances there was no other course open to him. Yet he was not anxious to be restored to power, nor had he much confidence in the future of his administration. "I felt reluctance," he said, "to resume office personally from a desire for rest, the title to which had possibly been in some degree earned, so far as it can be earned by labour. I felt this reluctance also politically, because I do not think that, as a general rule, the experience we have had in former years of what may be called returning or resuming governments has been very favourable in its character." Such a return, he continued, might be the lesser of two evils, yet it was not a thing in itself to be desired. Still, the Liberal government had resumed their offices, and having resumed them he promised ministers would endeavour fully and honourably to discharge the duties appertaining to them.

Mr. Disraeli then entered at considerable length upon an explanation of the course he had pursued (March 20, 1873). "I think it may be convenient," he began, "that I should, as clearly as I can, place before the House exactly what part I have taken in these recent transactions, and give fully the reasons for the counsel which I presumed to offer Her Majesty under the circumstances. It was on this day week, when I was about to enter the House of Commons, that I had the honour of receiving a letter from the queen, informing me that Mr. Gladstone—I am correct in mentioning the right hon. gentleman's name—had just quitted the palace, having offered his own resignation and that of his colleagues to Her Majesty in consequence of the vote

at which the House of Commons arrived on the preceding Tuesday, and that Her Majesty had accepted those resignations. The queen inquired from me whether I would undertake to form a government, and commanded my attendance at the palace. When I was in audience I inquired of Her Majesty whether she wished that I should give a categorical answer to the question asked in Her Majesty's letter, or whether she desired that I should enter fully into the political situation. Her Majesty was graciously pleased to say that she should like to have an answer to that question, and that afterwards she wished me fully and freely to speak upon the present condition of affairs. The question being whether I would undertake to form a government, I at once said that I believed I should have no material difficulty in forming an administration which could carry on the affairs of this country with efficiency, and be entitled to Her Majesty's confidence; but that I could not undertake to conduct Her Majesty's affairs in the present House of Commons.

"After that I proceeded—with Her Majesty's permission—to lay before the queen the reasons which had induced me to arrive at this conclusion, and I will now, in as succinct a manner as I can, give these reasons to the House. I called Her Majesty's attention to the fact that, although the course of the public elections during the last two years* had shown, in a manner which I think must be acknowledged by all impartial persons, that there was a change, and even a considerable change in public opinion, and in favour of the party with whom I have the honour to act in parliament, still it was a fact which ought to be placed clearly before Her Majesty, that the right hon. gentleman opposite—notwithstanding all these gains by the Conservative party—was supported by a very large majority, and that I could

* In 1870 the government had won four seats and lost five; in 1871 the gain was reduced to one seat and the losses rose to six; whilst in 1872 there were seven defeats, and the government could not boast a single victory.

not place that majority at a figure which could be accurately expressed, unless I stated that it approached more nearly to ninety than eighty. I believe I was correct in saying the majority of the right hon. gentleman was eighty-eight.

"Then I called the attention of the queen to the fact that the recent division indicated no elements to which I could look with any confidence to obtain subsidiary or extraneous aid which would in any considerable degree, or perhaps in any degree whatever, modify the numerical position of the right hon. gentleman; that the discomfiture of the government was caused, and the majority against them created, by the vote of a considerable section of the Liberal party, consisting of Irish members, who might be fairly described as representing the Roman Catholic interest, and that there was no common bond of union between myself and that party. I stated that they would act—and most honourably act—with a view to effect the object which they wish to accomplish, namely, the establishment of a Roman Catholic university; that, in my opinion, that question had been definitely decided by the nation at the last general election, but that, totally irrespective of that national decision, events had occurred in parliament since which rendered it quite impossible for me to listen to any suggestions of the kind, because since the last general election the endowments of the Protestant Church of Ireland had been taken away from it—a policy which I entirely disapproved, which I had resisted, and which they had supported; and which, having been carried into effect, offered in my mind a permanent and insurmountable barrier to the policy which they wished to see pursued.

"Under these circumstances I had to place before Her Majesty that I, with my colleagues, should have to conduct her affairs in a House of Commons with a most powerful majority arrayed against us. I had to point out to Her Majesty that this was a position of affairs of which

I had some personal experience, that I believed it to be one detrimental to the public interest; that it permitted abstract resolutions on political affairs to be brought forward by persons who had no political responsibility, and that those resolutions were referred to afterwards, and precipitated the solution of great public questions which were not ripe for settlement. I represented to Her Majesty that this was a state of affairs which diminished authority, weakened government, certainly added no lustre to the crown, but, above all, destroyed that general public confidence which is the most vigorous and legitimate source of power. Under these circumstances I felt it my duty to ask Her Majesty graciously to relieve me from the task which she had suggested to my consideration."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to explain why he had not suggested a dissolution, and offered some interesting remarks upon the subject.

"Now, sir, it will be asked, and has been asked, no doubt, in every street and every chamber in this town, why, when being able to form an efficient administration, and having been summoned to the councils of Her Majesty deprived of the assistance of her previous advisers, the only obstacle before me being that I had to encounter a hostile majority in the House of Commons—it will be asked, I say, why, under these circumstances, I did not advise Her Majesty to dissolve parliament. To that point, with the permission of the House, I will now address myself. Sir, a dissolution of parliament is a political function respecting which considerable misconception exists. It is supposed to be an act which can be performed with great promptitude, and which is a resource to which a minister may recur with the utmost facility. But the fact is that great mistakes prevail respecting this important exercise of the prerogative. A dissolution of parliament is a very different instrument in different hands. It is an instrument of which a

minister in office, with his government established, can avail himself with a facility of which a minister who is only going to accede to office is deprived. A minister in office, having his government formed, with many indications probably of the critical circumstances which may render it imperative on him to advise the sovereign to exercise this prerogative, has the opportunity of disposing of the public business preparatory to the act which he advises.

"But the position of a minister who is only going to accede to office is, in this respect, very different. In the first place, he has to form his administration, and that is a work of great time, great labour, and of great responsibility. It is not confined merely to the construction of a cabinet, which, when you are honoured by the confidence of many companions in public life, is often the least difficult part of the task; but it requires communication with probably more than fifty individuals, all of them persons of consideration, with whom you must personally confer. The construction of a ministry falls entirely on the individual intrusted with its formation.* It is a duty which can be delegated to no one. All the correspondence and all the interviews must be conducted by himself; and without dwelling on the sense of responsibility involved, the perception of fitness requisite, and the severe impartiality necessary in deciding on contending claims, the mere physical effort is not slight; and two-thirds

of the new ministers also must appeal for re-election to their constituents.

"As a matter of time, that materially affects the position of the government. Now in the present case it would not have been possible for me to have formed a government, and to have placed it on that bench and in the other House in working gear, until Easter. Well, the holidays would have intervened. After the holidays it might have been possible, by having recourse to methods I greatly disapprove—namely, provisional finance, by votes of credit, or rather votes on account, and by taking a step which, for reasons I will afterwards give, I highly reprobate, namely, accepting the estimates of our predecessors—it might have been possible to have dissolved parliament in the early part of the month of May. But when the month of May arrived, this question would occur—What are you going to dissolve parliament about? There was no particular issue before the country; at least it cannot be pretended for a moment that there was any one of those issues before the country that have previously justified extraordinary dissolutions of parliament—questions which the country wished passionately to decide, and when in a political exigency of that kind a minister is perfectly justified in having recourse to provisional finance, or any other means by which he can obtain the earliest decision of the country.

"I wish the House for a moment to consider impartially what was the real position of affairs. Her Majesty's ministers had resigned. Her Majesty had called on the leader of the Opposition to form a ministry, while he had nearly a majority of ninety arrayed against him. It was in his opinion necessary, of course, in the circumstances, to appeal to the country, in order that that majority might be changed, probably into one—though perhaps not of that amount—in his favour. But if that be the real state of the case, if there was no issue before the country—for I do not suppose any one would maintain that the Irish University

* It is only within a very recent period that the selection of the prime minister has been distinctly acknowledged as the free choice of the crown. The prime minister—as the minister in whom the crown has placed its constitutional confidence, and who is responsible to the sovereign for the government of the whole empire—it is now conceded, should be the free choice of the crown itself. "I offered no opinion," said Sir Robert Peel in 1845, "as to the choice of a successor. *That is almost the only act which is the personal act of the sovereign; it is for the sovereign to determine in whom her confidence shall be placed.*" Still, as no minister can govern the country for any length of time who does not possess the confidence of the House of Commons, any undue exercise of the royal prerogative is thus restrained. As the prime minister is the special choice of the crown, so those who form a ministry are the special choice of the prime minister; and as this special choice entails much correspondence, Mr. Disraeli knew what he was saying when he declared that "the mere physical effort" upon the new premier was not "slight."

Bill was a question on which we could dissolve—the right hon. gentleman by dissolving might have wished to punish those who voted against him; but I could not take that course, for I was one of the criminals. If the case be as I state, that we could not carry on affairs without an appeal to the country upon grounds which would justify the constituencies in giving us a majority, is it not quite clear that we could not appeal to the country without having a matured and complete policy?”

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to show it was impossible for an Opposition, suddenly called upon to express its views, to have a “matured policy” to present to the country. An Opposition was essentially a critical body; it was not, and could not be, a constructive one. How could the Conservative party, therefore, asked Mr. Disraeli, dissolve parliament and appeal to the country for its confidence without guiding it, since an Opposition could never for a moment rival the information possessed by a government with regard to all public questions? “Until we were in office,” he said, “and had the means of considering and maturing our policy on the subject, the House must feel that would have been impossible. We should have had to go on that and other matters with a blank sheet of paper to the constituencies. Would that, I ask, have been an appeal becoming us to make to a sensible people like the English nation?”

Without possessing the special information obtained by a government, what could the Conservative party say to the country upon such subjects as local taxation, the compensation awarded by the tribunal of Geneva, and the state of foreign affairs, for “greater changes have occurred in Europe since the government of 1868 than were effected by the congress and the treaty of Vienna?” Then there would be the finance to consider, and here Mr. Disraeli took the opportunity to defend the financial administration of his own government. “I mentioned to the House just now the necessity, in case we dissolved parliament in the month of

May—which would be the earliest possible period—of accepting the estimates of our predecessors which are on the table. As a general rule, and at all times, I highly reprobate that course. Nothing but a political exigency, nothing but the existence of a question on which the country is passionately determined to have an instant decision, can justify a minister in taking that course. But look to our particular position with respect to this subject? You must remember that at the last general election the country was particularly appealed to on the head of expenditure. The expenditure of the government of which I was the head was denounced as ‘profligate;’ and the manner in which it was so held up to the people of this country greatly influenced the elections, quite as much as the question of that unfortunate institution, the Irish Church, the spoliation of which, I believe, is not now so popular as it was at that time. I speak with due diffidence on the point; there are alterations made in the mode of keeping the accounts since the election of 1868; but, making all the deductions I can on this head, it does not appear to me that the expenditure of the country at the present moment is less than it was when it was denounced at the election of 1868. I certainly do not wish on this occasion to make any charge against the present government; but this I may say, it is a subject most important and interesting to the people of England, and one which, if I were a responsible minister to-morrow, it would be my first task and effort to scrutinize with a view to find out whether there was any ground for the denunciation of the expenditure of 1868, and whether there are adequate grounds for the expenditure which at present prevails. This is a most grave business, which cannot be done in a moment. The estimates of this country cannot and ought not to be settled by a few Treasury clerks. I have endeavoured to impress upon the House more than once—and generally speaking the principle has been accepted—that expenditure depends upon policy;

and, therefore, before we could decide what was the fitting expenditure of the country, especially in armaments, we must be minutely and accurately informed what are our engagements and relations with the various powers of the world."

Mr. Gladstone had complained that Mr. Disraeli had not exhausted all the means at his disposal before refusing to take office. This accusation Mr. Disraeli denied, and in refutation read to the House the following passage from his letter to the queen:—"The charge against the leader of the Opposition personally, that by his 'summary refusal' to undertake your Majesty's government he was failing in his duty to your Majesty and the country, is founded altogether upon a gratuitous assumption by Mr. Gladstone, which pervades his letter, that the means of Mr. Disraeli to carry on his government were not 'exhausted.' A brief statement of facts will at once dispose of this charge. Before Mr. Disraeli, with due deference, offered his decision to your Majesty, he had enjoyed the opportunity of consulting with those gentlemen with whom he acts in public life, and they were unanimously of opinion that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the country for a Conservative administration to attempt to conduct your Majesty's affairs in the present House of Commons. What other means were at Mr. Disraeli's disposal? Was he to make overtures to the considerable section of the Liberal party who had voted against the government—namely, the Irish Roman Catholic gentlemen? Surely Mr. Gladstone could not seriously contemplate this. Impressed from experience obtained in the very instances to which Mr. Gladstone refers of the detrimental influence upon government of a crisis unnecessarily prolonged by hollow negotiations, Mr. Disraeli humbly conceived that he was taking a course advantageous to the public interests, and tending to spare your Majesty unnecessary anxiety, by at once laying before your Majesty the real position of affairs."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the cabinet of 1852, when Lord Derby, much against his will, had to take the reins of government. He knew, therefore, what it was to govern with a minority, and nothing would induce him to repeat the experiment. "I know well," he said, "and those who are around me know well, what will occur when a ministry takes office and attempts to carry on the government with a minority during the session, with a view of ultimately appealing to the people. We should have what is called 'fair play;' that is to say, no vote of want of confidence would be proposed, and chiefly because it would be of no use. There would be *no wholesale censure, but retail humiliation*. A right hon. gentleman will come down here, he will arrange his thumb-screws and other instruments of torture on this table—we shall never ask for a vote without a lecture; we shall never perform the most ordinary routine office of government without there being annexed to it some pedantic and ignominious condition.

"I wish to express nothing," he humorously continued, "but what I know from painful personal experience. No contradiction of the kind I have just encountered could divest me of the painful memory; I wish it could. I wish it was not my duty to take this view of the case. In a certain time we should enter into the paradise of abstract resolutions. One day hon. gentlemen cannot withstand the golden opportunity of asking the House to affirm, that the income tax should no longer form one of the features of our ways and means. Of course a proposition of that kind would be scouted by the right hon. gentleman and all his colleagues; but then they might dine out that day, and the resolution might be carried, as resolutions of that kind have been. Then another hon. gentleman [Mr. Rylands], distinguished for his knowledge of men and things, would move that the diplomatic service be abolished. While hon. gentlemen opposite were laughing in their sleeves at the mover, they would vote

for the motion in order to put the government into a minority. For this reason:—‘Why should men,’ they would say, ‘govern the country who are in a minority?’ totally forgetting that we had acceded to office in the spirit of the constitution, quite oblivious of the fountain and origin of the position we occupied. And it would go very hard if, on some sultry afternoon, some hon. member [Mr. Trevelyan] should not ‘rush in where angels fear to tread,’ and successfully assimilate the borough and the county franchise. And so things would go on until the bitter end—until at last even the Appropriation Bill has passed, parliament is dissolved, and we appeal to those millions who, perhaps six months before, might have looked upon us as the vindicators of intolerable grievances, but who now receive us as a defeated, discredited, and degraded ministry, whose services can be neither of value to the crown nor a credit to the nation.

“Well, sir,” concluded Mr. Disraeli, “with these views, I think the House cannot be surprised that I should have felt it my duty, in concurrence with all those with whom I have acted in public life, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that I did not think it would be for the public advantage or for the honour of the crown that, under such circumstances—namely, the existence of a powerful majority against us—we should attempt to conduct Her Majesty’s affairs. . . . I am quite aware that the counsel I humbly recommended to Her Majesty in these negotiations may have been disappointing to some of my supporters in this House, and to many of my supporters in the country; but I would fain believe that, when they have given a mature and an impartial consideration to all the circumstances, they will not visit my conduct with a verdict of unqualified condemnation. I believe that the Tory party at the present time occupies the most satisfactory position which it has held since the days of its greatest statesmen, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville. It has divested

itself of those excrescences which are not indigenous to its native growth, but which in a time of long prosperity were the consequence partly of negligence, and partly perhaps, in a certain degree, of ignorance of its traditions. We are now emerging from the fiscal period in which almost all the public men of this generation have been brought up. All the questions of trade and navigation, of the incidence of taxation and of public economy, are settled. But there are other questions not less important, and of deeper and higher reach and range, which must soon engage the attention of the country. *The attributes of a constitutional monarchy—whether the aristocratic principle should be recognized in our constitution, and if so, in what form?—whether the commons of England shall remain an estate of the realm, numerous but privileged and qualified, or whether they should degenerate into an indiscriminate multitude?—whether a national church shall be maintained, and if so, what shall be its rights and duties?—the functions of corporations, the sacredness of endowments, the tenure of landed property, the free disposal and even the existence of any kind of property*—all those institutions and all those principles which have made this country free and famous, and conspicuous for its union of order with liberty, are now impugned, and in due time will become great and ‘burning’ questions. I think it is of the utmost importance that when that time—which may be nearer at hand than we imagine—arrives there shall be in this country a great constitutional party, distinguished for its intelligence as well as for its organization, which shall be competent to lead the people and direct the public mind. And, sir, when that time arrives, and when they enter upon a career which must be noble, and which I hope and believe will be triumphant, I think they may perhaps remember, and not perhaps with unkindness, that I at least prevented one obstacle from being placed in their way, when as the trustee of their honour

and interests I declined to form a weak and discredited administration."

No one reading this speech by the light of subsequent events can come to any other conclusion, than that the decision arrived at by Mr. Disraeli was that of the wise and patient statesman he invariably revealed himself at those seasons when judgment and prescience were required.

The House now settled down to the work of the session, and ministers attempted to carry out some of the more prominent measures which they had inserted in their ambitious programme. The next occasion which called forth the opposition of Mr. Disraeli was when, on the second reading of the Burials Bill (March 26, 1873), he moved that the bill be read "this day six months." Mr. Osborne Morgan had during the last four years been petitioning the House of Commons to redress the alleged grievances endured by the Dissenters, so far as the right of burial in a parish churchyard was concerned. The corpse of a Nonconformist was not permitted to be buried in the churchyard of the parish church, unless the burial service appointed by the Church of England was at the same time read over the grave by a clergyman of that church. Mr. Morgan wished to remove this restriction; and he had brought in bills, which hitherto had been rejected by the House, with the object of allowing the Dissenters in a parish to be interred in the parish churchyard, and the services over the grave to be performed by Dissenters, and after the fashion they desired. To this bill the Anglican party strongly objected, and their hostility found a warm supporter in the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Disraeli contended that the rights of all parishioners with respect to burial, whether Churchmen or Nonconformists, were identical. The Nonconformist had as much right to be buried in the parish churchyard as the Churchman; nor did the Churchman enjoy any privilege which was denied to the Nonconformist. It might

be argued that the church was national property; but even if that were so, which was a contested point, the Dissenters by refusing to pay church rates had publicly recognized that the churches and churchyards belonged to Churchmen. "Having taken up their position," said Mr. Disraeli, "they must abide by its consequences. If the churchyards are national property, let the nation support them. If they are national property reimpose the church rates, and let the Dissenters pay up all arrears which unquestionably are due to the country. I am perfectly willing myself to rest the whole of my opposition to this measure upon that case. By the abolition of church rates, and by throwing the maintenance of the fabric of the churches and of the churchyards upon Churchmen, the Nonconformists have placed themselves in such a position that they are not justified in interfering with the conditions upon which they are allowed to use churchyards." The Dissenters, he continued, had their own burial-grounds and the public cemeteries; why should they, therefore, agitate to be interred in the parish churchyards, especially since their original objection to churchyards had been because those places were consecrated? On what plea, he asked, did the Dissenter want to go back from his unconsecrated ground to the consecrated churchyard? It was an inconsistency, he said, not easy to explain. The Dissenters had no grievance, and if the Nonconformist body wished to use the parish churchyards they must use them upon every principle of law and equity—in other words, upon the conditions imposed by those to whom they belonged. The concluding words of advice which Mr. Disraeli here gave to the Dissenting interest will bear translation from the pages of "Hansard."

"And now, before sitting down, I would make one remark to my Nonconformist fellow-countrymen on this matter. About forty years ago an Act was passed in this country—the Reform Act of Lord Grey—

which invested the Nonconformist and Dissenting bodies in this country with great power. Whether it was intended or not, it is unnecessary now to consider; but there is no question that they gained a preponderance of electoral and political power under that Act—I must say out of proportion to their population and their wealth—I will not say to their intelligence and public spirit, for they have always been distinguished in those respects. That power which they gained forty years ago they have used with great energy and with admirable organization. I do not for a moment pretend to say, that there have not been many instances in which they have used it wisely. So long as they maintained toleration, so long as they favoured religious liberty, so long as they checked sacerdotal arrogance, they acted according to their traditions, and those traditions are not the least noble in the history of England. But they have changed their position. They now make war, and avowedly make war, upon the ecclesiastical institutions of the country.* I think they are in error in pursuing that course. I believe it is not for their own interest. However ambiguous and discursive may be the superficial aspects of the religious life of this country, the English are essentially a religious people; and I am much mistaken if there be not, even among those who may be apparently in careless communion with its rites, a feeling of reverence and affection for the church. They look upon it instinctively as an institution which vindicates the spiritual nature of man, and as a city of refuge in the strife and sorrows of existence.

"I want my Nonconformist friends to remember that another Act of Parliament has been passed affecting the circumstances of England since the Act of 1832. It appeals to the heart of the country. It aims at emancipation from

undue sectarian influence; and I do not think that the Nonconformist body will for the future exercise that undue influence upon the returns to this House, which they have now for forty years employed. I address gentlemen of great acuteness; and though they may not touch upon the subject themselves, I dare say there is more than one member present who has the same opinion as myself upon that subject. Let them not be misled by the last general election. The vast majority arrayed against us was not returned by the new constituencies. It was the traditional and admirable organization of the Dissenters of England that effected the triumph of the right hon. gentleman. They were animated by a great motive to enthusiasm. They saw before them the destruction of a church. I do not think that at the next appeal to the people, the Nonconformist body will find that the same result can be obtained. I say not this by way of taunt, certainly not in a spirit of anticipated triumph. I say it because I wish the Nonconformist body to pause and think, and to feel that for the future it may be better for them, instead of *assailing the church, to find in it a faithful and sound ally*. There is a common enemy abroad to all churches and to all religious bodies. Their opinions rage on the Continent. Their poisonous distillations have entered even into this isle. We see ancient dogmas, thrice refuted, dressed up again in the garb of specious novelty, and again influencing the opinions of men. What I want to see is a cessation of this war between the Nonconformist body and the Church of England. Let them be allied against the common enemy, and resist the influence of those who, if successful, will degrade man and destroy civilization."

On a division the amendment of Mr. Disraeli was rejected by a majority of sixty-three, and the bill read a second time. It was not, however, as we shall see, until some years later that the Burials Bill was entered upon the pages of the statute-book.

* Mr. Miall, though always in a minority, had been very busy with his motions for the disestablishment of the Church of England.

Owing to what Mr. Crawford called the "burst of prosperity" which the country was then enjoying, the purse of the nation was well lined. Trade was brisk, wages were high, labour was in full demand, and the consequence was that more spirits were consumed, more tobacco smoked, and more tea and coffee drunk, with the pleasing result of enabling a chancellor of the exchequer to come before the House of Commons and own that he had a surplus of nearly five millions to deal with. The fact that there was a surplus was received with cheers by both sides of the House, but the mode in which Mr. Lowe proposed to deal with taxation owing to this most satisfactory balance met with almost unanimous disapproval. The only benefits he intended to confer upon a long-suffering and heavily-burdened community were to reduce the sugar-duties a farthing in the pound, and to take off a penny of the income tax. These reductions were not very graciously received, and the government were loudly urged to utilize the surplus for a more marked relief of the income tax, and especially of the burdens of local taxation. Mr. W. H. Smith, as the representative of a constituency in which local taxation was severely felt, came to the rescue of the oppressed middle classes, and moved an amendment, when the report of the sugar-duty reduction was brought up, to the effect that "before deciding on the further reduction of indirect taxation, it is desirable that the House should be put in possession of the views of the government with reference to the maintenance and the adjustment of direct taxation, both imperial and local." This amendment was opposed by Mr. Lowe in his rudest and most "colonial" manner. The government, he said, had already complied with the conditions of the amendment, and therefore there was no need further to delay matters. In his budget he had aimed at the reductions of direct and indirect taxation balancing each other; the poor, who paid the indirect taxes, were entitled to have as much relief as the rich who paid

direct taxes. The motion of Mr. Smith, he asserted, would upset the budget; because after that part which was to benefit the poor was struck out, the government would not go on with that which relieved the rich. It was simply a motion to manipulate the surplus for the exclusive benefit of the rich and of the landed interest; and those who thought that such a proposal would not work discontent, must regard the working classes as either saints or idiots. He saw perfectly what was the game of the Opposition, but, for his part, he was resolved to have justice done to the poor working man. Mr. Lowe concluded by declaring that the government would treat the motion of Mr. Smith as an affront and a vote of censure. Then he asked, with a sneer, if the government were defeated, what course would the Opposition pursue? Were they prepared with a plan, or was another fortnight to be consumed in another ministerial crisis to end as before?

It was touching to see the man who, a few years ago, had exhausted all the coarsest terms of abuse in the parliamentary vocabulary to describe the character and habits of the working classes, now appearing in the light of their patron and protector. Mr. Lowe posed as "the poor man's friend;" and, like all men who undertake a new *rôle* somewhat late in life, he overplayed his part. "It is not because the chancellor of the exchequer cares for the poor," laughed a witty member, "but because he carries the bag."

The amendment was so completely in harmony with the views of the leader of the Opposition that it was only to be expected that it would receive his vigorous support. The expectation was realized. In a careful and critical speech (May 1, 1873), Mr. Disraeli came to the aid of his friend. The amendment was perfectly reasonable and natural. "It is universally acknowledged," he said, "that this country is at the present moment in a state of great prosperity; that the wealthy are very wealthy; that the labouring classes are in the enjoy-

ment of higher wages than probably at any period of our history have been received by them; and that that high rate of wages has been combined with less toil than they have hitherto been subjected to. And yet there is no question that a considerable portion of the population of this country, a very large class, a class entitled in every sense to our respect and consideration—classes, I may say, that we have been accustomed to look up to as the very marrow of our population, and on whose sense of order and reverence for law we have greatly depended for the security of the commonwealth—are in most straitened circumstances, that they feel even intensely the pressure of taxation, and that their condition is aggravated, if not occasioned, by the high prices which now prevail, caused by that very prosperity which has made the rich more rich, and which has given to the working classes that welfare which is universally admitted to exist.” Yet that class, he remarked—the only suffering class then in existence—had been especially exempted by the chancellor of the exchequer from relief. With such a surplus in hand, he suggested that the income tax should be further reduced, and that local burdens—the rates in the towns and local taxation on the land—should be alleviated.

The motion which Mr. W. H. Smith had brought forward asked the government to consider, since the income tax and local taxation pressed so severely on a section of the community, whether they could not meet the exigencies of the case and offer some satisfactory solution of those difficulties. “Well, what is the answer of the right hon. gentleman?” said Mr. Disraeli, commenting sarcastically upon the ungentlemanlike reply of Mr. Lowe. “I will not

criticise the answer of the chancellor of the exchequer with the severity with which it has been criticised by many hon. gentlemen.* I do not view that answer in that spirit of indignation which has pervaded the House. The answer of the chancellor of the exchequer was certainly expressed in language and conveyed in a manner to which we are not used in this House. But I take a more charitable view of it than my hon. friends. I look upon it rather as an indication of what may be the juvenile ardour of some primitive assembly which has inherited, and I hope may excel, the traditions of our parliament. *It is not every one of us who has had the good fortune of dwelling in the Antipodes.* What says the chancellor of the exchequer? . . . He says, ‘What do you mean?’ I will not say he said it rudely. I will not resent his having accused an assembly of English gentlemen of being influenced only by greed and selfishness, because I have indicated the school in which these expressions probably were learnt. But the chancellor of the exchequer says, ‘What is to happen if you carry this resolution?’ Well, that which might happen if we carried this resolution might be what happened before; it is not the first budget of the chancellor of the exchequer that has been humbly criticised. This is not a budget that has been received with indignation and treated with contempt. It has been treated, I think, with reason and courtesy. The chancellor of the exchequer asks us, What will happen? I say that will happen probably, or might happen, which happened before. The chancellor of the exchequer will take back his budget; he will reconsider it, and he will give us a budget which may unanimously pass, and which may in some degree satisfy the country.”

* Lord George Hamilton was perhaps the severest critic on this occasion. “The chancellor of the exchequer,” he said, “had addressed the Opposition in terms which, as a young member of parliament, he hoped never to hear again. He very much questioned the advantage of a classical education, if it would not make a man express himself in terms less coarse and more polite. He should not like to reply to the chancellor of the exchequer in words similar to his own; but he wished to remind the House that in a speech made

by the right hon. gentleman about three years and a half ago, in addressing an audience in the West of England, he pointed out that there were certain duties incumbent upon the Opposition, and that one of them was ‘to moderate the insolence too apt to be engendered by great prosperity.’ If the chancellor of the exchequer were correct in that definition of the duties of an Opposition, it must be admitted that in one individual case they had lamentably neglected their duty.”

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to refute the assertion of Mr. Lowe, that indirect taxation was paid by the poor and direct taxation by the rich. The local taxation of the United Kingdom amounted to £25,000,000 a year, and the moiety of that was raised from those who were not wealthy. They had also in evidence that of this £25,000,000 the working classes contributed £5,000,000. Therefore the question could not be solved by simply saying, that indirect taxation was paid by the poor and direct taxation by the rich. At that moment the revenue raised was £90,000,000; it was easily raised, and with the exception of the sum exacted by local taxation, created little distress. It was estimated that the working classes numbered 21,000,000 out of the total population of the United Kingdom, and that they contributed £30,000,000 out of this £90,000,000. Nor, considering their number and their incomes, was that an immoderate contribution. In no country in the world were the working classes more lightly taxed than in England. He therefore protested against the argument of the chancellor of the exchequer, that indirect taxation was to be reduced because it was specially paid by the poor. And what was the benefit, he asked, to be derived by the working classes from this boasted philanthropy? A reduction in the sugar duties of a farthing in the pound, by which the working man might save some ninepence in the year! If the chancellor of the exchequer considered indirect taxation pressed so heavily on the poor, why did he not reduce the duties on tea, coffee, tobacco, and spirits? But the working classes were interested in other matters besides finance, and in addition they knew perfectly well in what light they were regarded by Mr. Lowe. "If you will go to them," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "and say, 'The chancellor of the exchequer has taken up your cause; he is going to reduce the duty upon sugar,' they will say, 'We know something about this gentleman; we have got his character of us stuck up on our mantlepieces; we do not

care about his *farthing philanthropy*; but we should like to know what he and his colleagues mean to do about the master and servant question, and several other questions of that kind.'"

The chancellor of the exchequer, continued Mr. Disraeli, had been entirely misled in the course he had adopted. No reduction of taxation was requisite, so far as the wealthy classes and the great body of the working classes were concerned. It was the poor man of the middle classes, who felt the weight of the income tax, and the agricultural interest, which had to bear a disproportionate burden of the local taxation of the country, who really needed relief. The question of local taxation had been frequently before the country, and with their present surplus in hand the government should at once revise and remodel the matter. He did not wish to treat the subject as a party question, and it was absurd for ministers to jump to the conclusion that the motion before the House was to be viewed as a vote of censure. "It is extraordinary," said Mr. Disraeli, "that a motion of this kind should immediately be stigmatized as a vote of censure on the government. We are, I am sorry to say, too much accustomed to such remarks from Her Majesty's ministers, and I wish gentlemen on both sides well to consider this habit which the present government have of viewing every independent movement on the part of the House of Commons as a vote of censure. It is a habit really fatal to all parliamentary independence, and if it is allowed to pass without comment and unchecked I really see very little use in the House of Commons ever assembling. A vote of censure we have heard of before. I have on other occasions attempted to vindicate the independent right of this House to express its opinion upon great subjects of policy, without its being supposed necessarily to involve a vote of censure on the government. But of all questions, questions of finance are ever held to be subject to independent criticism on the part of the House of Commons; and the

utmost indulgence is shown to the feelings and suggestions of members, because under such circumstances it is known that they are acting under the immediate impulse of their constituents." He therefore considered that Mr. Lowe had been exceedingly ill-advised in declaring that the government would look upon this motion as a vote of want of confidence. The threat was, however, sufficient to intimidate the House, and the motion was negatived without a division.

Upon the one great measure of the session—the Judicature Bill, which reformed the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords, terminated the distinction between law and equity, and united in one great tribunal all the higher courts of justice—Mr. Disraeli more than once commented in its passage through the House of Commons. His observations, however, do not call for any special notice. The administration of justice was, he said, very dear to the people of England, and he considered the judicature of the country admitted of reform. He eulogized the House of Lords for the unexceptionable manner in which they had administered justice in the past. He considered that the provisions of the bill should extend to Scotland and Ireland, and he refuted the popular notion that it was a breach of privilege for the House of Commons to interfere with the drawing up of a bill on legal procedure introduced by the Peers. Shortly after this measure had become law the session came to an end.

And now it was that during the repose of the recess the country openly proclaimed in the most marked manner its dislike to the past Liberal policy, and its attachment to the Conservative cause. The development of this dislike had been gradual, but progressive. In almost every seat which had been rendered vacant since the general election by the retirement of a member of the administration, the government candidate had been defeated. When the lord advocate, on being appointed lord-justice clerk, had vacated his seat for the University of Glasgow in 1869, he was succeeded by a

Conservative. On the appointment of Mr. H. A. Layard as ambassador at Madrid, in 1870, the borough of Southwark was represented by a Conservative. At the death of the judge advocate, in the April of 1871, a Conservative headed the poll at the election for the city of Durham. Upon the appointment of Mr. Vivian as permanent under-secretary for war, in the September of the same year, a Conservative had been returned for Truro. When that highly honourable job was effected by which Sir Robert Collier had taken his seat on the judicial committee of the privy council, in the November of 1871, a Conservative had represented Plymouth. On the elevation of the Irish solicitor-general to the bench, late in the year 1872, the borough of Londonderry had been awarded to the Conservative party. And in the autumn of the next year, when Mr. Glyn was rewarded with a peerage, Shaftesbury fell into the hands of a Conservative; so with Renfrewshire when Mr. Bruce gained his baron's coronet; and so with Dover when Sir George Jessel took his seat on the bench as master of the rolls. In both instances these ardent Liberals were succeeded by Conservatives. Nor were these the only losses sustained in 1873 by the government party. Hull, Greenock, Dundee, East Staffordshire, Exeter, and Huntingdon, all gave their votes in favour of the policy of the leader of the Opposition, and swelled the ranks of Conservatism. As a set-off against these successes the government could only claim the victories at Taunton and Bath; yet in neither of these places could they count a seat gained.

With regard to the election of Bath, Mr. Disraeli played a part which created much comment at the time. Mr. Forsyth, a counsel of distinction, was fighting in the Conservative interest to be returned as member for Bath, and it was expected that the election would result in another triumph for the Opposition. Lord Grey de Wilton had written to Mr. Disraeli, expressing his conviction that the country was on the eve of another Conservative

victory. He received the following reply:—"I am much obliged to you for your Bath news. It is most interesting. It is rare a constituency has the opportunity of not only leading, but sustaining public opinion, at a critical period. That has been the high fortune of the people of Bath, and they have proved themselves worthy of it by the spirit and constancy they have shown. I cannot doubt they will continue their patriotic course by supporting Mr. Forsyth, an able and accomplished man, who will do honour to those who send him to parliament. For nearly five years the present ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have always been discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy, and seem quite proud of it; but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering."

This letter, it must be admitted, was most injudicious, and caused the wavering Liberals in the west of England to unite again cordially with their party. There was nothing new in this epistle; for Mr. Disraeli, as we have seen, during the last few months was ever girding in the House of Commons at the government for having committed mistakes, for having "legalized confiscation," and for having harassed every interest. Yet it was one thing to attack the policy of ministers in his place in parliament as leader of the Opposition, and another thing on the eve of a contested election to irritate those, who might have deserted to the Conservative ranks, by including them in his sweeping condemnation of the past acts of the government. Many of the Bath Liberals frankly owned that they were disgusted with the numerous errors of which their leaders had been guilty—with the isolated foreign policy of the

prime minister, with the financial propositions of the chancellor of the exchequer, with the conduct of domestic affairs by the home secretary, with the oversights of the admiralty, and the rest of the ministerial mistakes. The charge that the government had "blundered" did not therefore anger these western Liberals, for they were now the first to admit the fact; but "plundered" was quite another accusation. Plundered was a word that could only refer to the Irish Church bill and the Irish land bill, and for both those measures the Liberals had enthusiastically voted. The indiscreet "Bath letter" caused the vacillating members of the party, who were not hostile to the return of Mr. Forsyth, to reconsider their position; and since they did not acknowledge that the two Acts which they had enrolled in the statute-book for the welfare of Ireland deserved to be branded as "plundering," they refused to stultify themselves by indirectly admitting the charge in the support of a Conservative candidate. Mr. Forsyth was not returned, and his defeat was attributed in no small degree to the fact that, intoxicated by the success of the hour, Mr. Disraeli in an evil moment had permitted himself to be aroused out of his disciplined reticence and commit a great blunder.

To stem the tide of this reactionary feeling, and to propitiate the country, Mr. Gladstone during this period of autumnal hostility effected certain beneficial changes in his administration. Private feuds had interfered with the course of public business, for it was now divulged, much to the amusement of a cynical world, that the members of the government were far from being a happy or united family. Ministers sat at the same council board who, outside political life, cordially detested each other; parliamentary secretaries met at the Treasury, and transacted their official business through a clerk because they were not on speaking terms with one another; whilst heads of departments worked their private secretaries to death in filling quires of

government paper full of mutual recriminations. Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to smooth over these feuds and jealousies by certain removals acceptable to the country. He took upon himself the offices of first lord of the Treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, and Mr. Lowe was transferred to the home office. Mr. Bruce, who, as home secretary, had shown much weakness and vacillation upon the licensing question, was raised to the peerage and appointed president of the council in the stead of the Marquis of Ripon, who had resigned. Mr. Childers, disgusted that the duties of the exchequer had not been intrusted to his hands, gave up the chancellorship of the duchy of Lancaster, and Mr. Bright, the opponent of sinecures, reigned in his place. Other minor changes were also carried out, which, if they caused the Liberal administration to work more smoothly, at the same time rendered it more toothless. These alterations were, however, viewed with little interest, for it was evident to all that the day was near at hand when ministers would be called upon to give up their seals and to carry their venom and mordancy to the other side of the House.

Whilst the tide had thus turned which was to bear him upon its ample flood to office, Mr. Disraeli travelled north, and became the hero of a public reception at Glasgow. The students of the university in that ancient city had shown their appreciation both of Conservative principles and of the great exponent of those principles by electing Mr. Disraeli as their lord rector. It was to deliver his inaugural address that the leader of the Opposition had gone north, there to meet the youths who had done him honour, and to lay before them that course of action most calculated to lead to success in life. The address is one of Mr. Disraeli's most finished compositions, and is remarkable for the prominence given, in a somewhat material and sceptical age, to the necessity of being under the influence of true religion. Three points the lecturer especially brings

before his audience: the necessity of acquiring self-knowledge, the necessity of knowing what is the spirit of the age, and the necessity of the religious principle.

The address was listened to with marked attention. The subject, the speaker, the recollections the strange career of Mr. Disraeli called forth, all served to create the deepest impression upon the audience. Who better able to preach the gospel of success to a body of young men on the eve of their start in life than he who, by his own talents and exertions, had risen from a stool in an attorney's office to preside over the fortunes of a cabinet? Who better qualified to advise a course of rigid self-examination before entering upon a career, than he who had so carefully and so accurately dissected his own powers and promptings as to predict his future? As a lad, Mr. Disraeli had known that genius was working within him, and he had vowed that the world should recognize it; and the world had recognized it. He knew that he possessed the gift of all those qualities which, when fused together, make the born orator; and in the hour when his maiden speech was ridiculed and shouted down, he had foretold—foretold at the moment when an ordinary mind would have been crushed by failure and mortification—that the time would come when the House would hear him; and the hour had come. He knew that he was to be a leader of men, and that it was his mission to regenerate and reorganize a great political party; and in spite of obstacles such as no other politician had surmounted, in spite of feuds, jealousies, and mutinous divisions, he had given a creed to his followers, and had received an obedience from those under his command such as few political chiefs had ever before enjoyed. Who, then, was better able to lecture upon success than he who had attained it? Who better able to preach introspection than he who had practised it to such purpose? Who better able to suggest the discovery of the spirit of the age than he who had found it, inspired

it, and turned it to his own ends? No wonder that the ambitious student, with the unknown future before him, with his fortune to carve out, with fond hopes and earnest prayers centred in him, hung upon the words of his lord rector, anxious to learn how success was to be achieved, and eager to embark upon the struggle.

The youth, began Mr. Disraeli (November 19, 1873), who wished to succeed in life and to obtain that position to which his character and capacity entitled him, had need of two kinds of knowledge: self-knowledge, and the faculty of comprehending the spirit of the age. At the first blush it seemed that self-knowledge was not very difficult of attainment; for if there was any subject on which a person could arrive at accurate conclusions, it should be as to his own disposition and his own talents. But it was not so. The period of youth in that respect was one of great doubt and difficulty; it was a period alike of false confidence and unreasonable distrust, of perplexity, of despondency, and sometimes of despair. It had been said by an eminent physician that there were very few persons of either sex who had attained to their eighteenth year who had not contemplated withdrawing from the world — withdrawing from that world which, in fact, they had never entered. Doubtless that morbid feeling was occasioned in a great degree by a dread of the unknown, but it was also much to be attributed to, and it certainly was heightened by, *an ignorance of themselves*.

How, then, he asked, was that self-knowledge to be acquired? and where were they to obtain assistance in that quest? From the family circle? Its incompetency in that respect was a proverb. Perception of character was always a rare gift, but around the domestic hearth it was almost unknown. Every one was acquainted with the erroneous estimates of their offspring which had been made even by illustrious parents.* The silent, but perhaps pensive boy, was

looked upon as a dullard, while the flippancy of youth in a commonplace character was interpreted into a dangerous vivacity which might in time astonish, perhaps even alarm, the world. A better criterion ought to be found in the judgment of those contemporaries who were our equals. But the generous ardour of youth was not favourable to critical discrimination: its sympathy was quick; it admired and applauded; but it lavished its applause and admiration on qualities which were often not intrinsically important, and it always exaggerated. And thus it was that the hero of school and of college often disappointed expectation in after-life. The truth was, such a hero had shown no deficiency in the qualities which obtained him his early repute, but he had been wanting in the capacity adapted to subsequent opportunities.

"Some are of opinion," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "that the surest judge of youthful character must be the tutor. And there is a passage in Isocrates on this head not without interest. He was an accomplished instructor, and he tells us he always studied to discover the bent of those who attended his lectures. So, after due observation, he would say to one, 'You are intended for action, and the camp is the life which will become you;' to another, 'You should cultivate poetry;' a third was adapted to the passionate exertions of the Pnyx; while a fourth was clearly destined for the groves and porticoes of philosophy. The early Jesuits, who were masters of education, were accustomed to keep secret registers of their observations on their pupils, and generations afterwards, when these records were examined, it is said the happy prescience of their remarks was strikingly proved by the subsequent success of many who had attained fame in arts and arms. But the Jesuits, gentlemen, whatever they may be now, were then very clever men; and I must confess that I am doubtful whether the judgment of tutors in general would be as infallible as that of Isocrates. In the first place, a just perception of character is always a rare gift.

* Who was more misunderstood by his parents than the father of Lord Beaconsfield?

When possessed in a high degree, it is the quality which specially indicates the leader of men. It is that which enables a general or a minister to select the fit instrument for the public purpose; without which all the preparations for a campaign, however costly and complete, may be fruitless, and all the deliberations of councils and all the discussions of parliament prove mere dust and wind. Scholars and philosophers are in general too much absorbed by their own peculiar studies or pursuits to be skilled in the discrimination of character; and if the aptitude of a pupil is recognized by them, it is generally when he has evinced a disposition to excel in some branch of acquirement which has established their own celebrity."

He believed, continued the speaker, that it was best and inevitable, in the pursuit of self-knowledge, that youth and all of us should depend on *self-communion*. Unquestionably, where there was a strong predisposition it would assert itself in spite of all obstacles, but even then only after an initiation of many errors and much self-deception. One of the fruitful sources of that self-deception was to be found in the susceptibility of the youthful mind. The sympathy was so quick, that youth was apt to transfer to its own person the qualities which it admired in others. If it be the age of a great poet, his numbers were for ever resounding in the ears of youth, who sighed for his laurels; if a military age, nothing would content him but to be at the head of armies; if an age of oratory and politics, his spirit required that he should be a leader so parties and a minister of state. In some instances the predisposition might be true, but it was in the nature of things that the instances must be rare. In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the feeling was not *idiosyncratic* but *mimetic*, and a quick sensibility had been mistaken for creative power. Then came to a young man the period of disappointment and despondency. To publish poems which no one would read; to make speeches to which no one would listen; after reveries of leading armies and directing

councils, to find oneself, on his entrance into the business of life, incapable of influencing the conduct of an ordinary individual—all that was bitter; *but all depended upon how the lesson was received*. A weak spirit would not survive that catastrophe of his self-love. He would sink into chronic despondency, and, without attempting to rally, he would pass through life as a phantom, and be remembered, as an old man, only by the golden promise of his deceptive youth. But a man of sense would accept those consequences, however apparently mortifying, with courage and candour. He would dive into his own intelligence, he would analyze the circumstances of his failure, he would discriminate how much was occasioned by indigenous deficiencies, and how much was to be attributed to external and fortuitous circumstances. And in that severe introspection he might obtain the self-knowledge he required; his failures might be the foundation of his ultimate success; and in that moral and intellectual struggle he might discover the true range of his powers, and the right bent of his character and capacity. So much for self-knowledge—a subject that for ages had furnished philosophers with treatises.

Then there was the second kind of knowledge, proceeded Mr. Disraeli. Assuming that youth had at length attained that indispensable self-knowledge, and that it had an opportunity, in the pursuits of life, of following the bent of its disposition, had it that other kind of knowledge which was required? did it comprehend the spirit of the age in which its faculties were to be exercised? Hitherto it had been as an explorer in a mountain district. It had surveyed and examined valleys, it had penetrated gorges, it had crossed many a ridge and range, till at length, having overcome all obstacles, it had reached the crest of the commanding height, and like the soldiers of Xenophon, it beheld the sea. But the sea that it beheld was the ocean of life! In what vessel was it going to embark? With what instruments was it

furnished? What was the port of its destination?

"It is singular," said Mr. Disraeli, "that though there is no lack of those who will explain the past, and certainly no want of those who will predict the future, when the present is concerned—the present that we see and feel—our opinions about it are in general bewildered and mistaken. And yet, without this acquaintance with the spirit of the age in which we live, whatever our culture and whatever our opportunities, it is probable that our lives may prove a blunder. When the young king of Macedon decided that the time had arrived when Europe should invade Asia, he recognized the spirit of his age. The revelations of the weakness of the great king, which had been made during the immortal expedition of the Ten Thousand, and still more during the campaigns of Agesilaus, had gradually formed a public opinion which Alexander dared to represent. When Caius Julius perceived that the colossal empire formed by the senate and populace of Rome could not be sustained on the municipal institutions of a single city, however illustrious, he understood the spirit of the age. Constantine understood the spirit of his age when he recognized the sign under which he was resolved to conquer. I think that Luther recognized the spirit of the age when he nailed his Theses against Indulgences to the gates of a Thuringian church. The great princes of the house of Tudor, and the statesmen they employed, were all persons who understood the spirit of their age."

Still it might be said, he remarked, "Those were heroic instances. A perception of the spirit of their age might be necessary to the success of princes and statesmen, but was not needful, or equally needful, for those of lesser degree." He thought there would be fallacy in that criticism, and that the necessity of such knowledge pervaded the whole business of life. Take, for example, he instanced, the choice of a profession; a knowledge of the spirit of the age might save a young

man from embracing a profession which the spirit of the age doomed to become obsolete. It was the same with the pursuits of commerce. Such knowledge might guard a man from embarking his capital in a decaying trade, or from forming connections and even establishments in countries from which the spirit of the age was gradually diverting all commercial transactions. A knowledge of the spirit of the age, he maintained, was necessary for every public man; and in a country like England, where the subject was called upon hourly to exercise rights and to fulfil duties which, in however small a degree, contributed to the aggregate of that general sentiment which ultimately governed states, every one was a public man, although he might not be a public character.

Yet it did not follow, because the spirit of the age was perceived, that it should be embraced, or even that success in life depended upon adopting it. What he wished, said the speaker, to impress upon his audience was that success in life depended on understanding what the spirit of the age was. The spirit of the age might be an unsound and injurious spirit; it might be the moral duty of a man, not only not to defer to, but to resist it; and if it were unsound and injurious, in so doing he would not only fulfil his duty, but he might accomplish his success in life. The spirit of the age, for instance, was in favour of the Crusades. They occasioned a horrible havoc of human life; they devastated Asia and exhausted Europe; and in all probability, in acting in that instance according to the spirit of the age, a man would have forfeited his life, and certainly wasted his estate, with no further satisfaction than having massacred some Jews and slain some Saracens.

"What then, gentlemen," he asked, "is the spirit of the age in which we ourselves live; of that world which in a few years, more or less, you will have all entered; where you are to establish yourselves in life; where you have to encounter in that

object every conceivable difficulty—perplexities of judgment, material obstacles, tests of all your qualities, and searching trials of your character; and all these circumstances more or less affected by the spirit of the age, an acquaintance with which will assist you in forming your decisions and in guiding your course? It appears to me that I should not greatly err were I to describe the spirit of this age as the *spirit of equality*; but 'equality' is a word of wide import, under which various schools of thought may assemble and yet arrive at different and even contradictory conclusions. I hold that civil equality—that is, equality of all subjects before the law, and that a law which recognizes the personal rights of all subjects—is the only foundation of a perfect commonwealth, one which secures to all liberty, order, and justice. The principle of civil equality has long prevailed in this kingdom. It has been applied during the last half-century more finely and completely to the constantly and largely varying circumstances of the country; but it had prevailed more or less in Britain for centuries, and I attribute the patriotism of our population mainly to this circumstance, and I believe that it has had more to do with the security of the soil than those geographical attributes usually enlarged upon.

"Another land, long our foe, but now our rival only in the arts of peace, thought fit, at the end of the last century, to reconstruct its social system, and to rebuild it on the principle of social equality. To effect this object it was prepared to make, and it made, great sacrifices. It subverted all the institutions of the country: a monarchy of 800 years, whose traditionary and systematic policy had created the kingdom; a national church—for, though Romanist, it had secured its liberties; a tenure of land which maintained a valiant nobility that never can be restored; it confiscated all endowments and abolished all corporations, erased from the map of the soil all the ancient divisions, and changed the land-

marks and very name of the country. Indeed, it entirely effected its purpose, which was to destroy all the existing social elements and level the past to the dust. This experiment has had fair play, and you can judge of its results by the experience of eighty years.

"It is not in Scotland," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the name of France will ever be mentioned without affection, and I will not yield to any Scotchman in my appreciation of the brilliant qualities and the resplendent achievements of its gifted people. We are not blind to their errors, but their calamities are greater than their errors, and their merits are greater than their calamities. When I heard that their bright city was beleaguered, and that the breach was in the wall, I confess I felt that pang which I remember, as a child, I always experienced when I read of Lysander entering the City of the Violet Crown. But, gentlemen, I may on this occasion be permitted to say that of all the many services which France has rendered to Europe—Europe, that land of ancient creeds and ancient governments, and manners and customs older than both—not the least precious is the proof she has afforded to us that *the principle of social equality is not one on which a nation can safely rely in the hour of trial and in the day of danger*. Then it is found that there is no one to lead and nothing to rally round. There is not a man in the country who can assemble fifty people. And rightly, since for an individual to direct is an usurpation of the sovereignty of the many. Those who ought to lead feel isolated, and those who wish to obey know not to whom to proffer their devotion. All personal influences are dead. All depends on the central government, a sufficient power in fair weather, but in stormy times generally that part of the machine which first breaks."

Civil equality, continued Mr. Disraeli, prevailed in Britain, and social equality prevailed in France. The essence of civil equality was to abolish privilege; the

essence of social equality was to destroy classes. If the principle of equality at the present day assumed only those two forms, he did not think there would be much to perplex youth in its choice or in its judgment as to their respective results. But that was not so. The equality which was now sought by vast multitudes of men in many countries, which was enforced by writers not deficient in logic, in eloquence, and even learning, scarcely deigned to recognize civil equality, and treated social equality only as an obsolete truth. No moral or metaphysical elements would satisfy them. They demanded physical and material equality. That was the disturbing spirit which was then rising like a moaning wind in Europe, and which, when the youth before him entered the world, might possibly be a raging storm.

"The leading principle of this new school," explained Mr. Disraeli, ever firm in his loyalty to "the side of the angels," "is that there is no happiness which is not material, and that every living being has a right to share in that physical welfare. The first obstacle to their purpose is found in the rights of private property. Therefore, they must be abolished. But the social system must be established on some principle; and, therefore, for the rights of property they would substitute the rights of labour. Now, the rights of labour cannot be fully enjoyed if there be any limit to employment. The great limit to employment, to the rights of labour, and to the physical and material equality of man, is found in the division of the world into states and nations. Thus, as civil equality would abolish privilege, social equality would destroy classes; so material and physical equality strikes at the principle of patriotism, and is prepared to abrogate countries.

"Now, I am addressing a race of men who are proud, and justly proud, of their country. I know not that the sentiment of patriotism beats in any breast more strongly than in that of a Scotchman.

Neither time nor distance, I believe, enfeebles that passion. It is as vehement on the banks of the Ganges as on the banks of the Clyde, and in the speculative turmoil of Melbourne as in the bustling energy of Glasgow. Why is a Scotchman proud of his country? Because the remembrance of it awakes a tradition of heroic exploits and inspiring emotions; of sacrifices for its sake in the field and on the scaffold; of high examples of military skill and civil prudence; of literary and scientific fame; of commanding eloquence and profound philosophy, and of fascinating poesy and romance—all of which a Scotchman feels ennoble his existence, and all of which he is conscious have inevitably sprung from the circumstances of his native land. So that the very configuration of the soil and the temper of the clime have influenced his private virtues and his public life, as they unquestionably have given a form and colour to those works of creative genius which have gained the sympathy and admiration of the world.

"No, gentlemen, it is not true that the only *real happiness* is *physical happiness*; it is not true that physical happiness is the highest happiness; it is not true that physical happiness is a principle on which you can build up a flourishing and enduring commonwealth. A civilized community must rest on a large realized capital of thought and sentiment; there must be a reserved fund of public morality to draw upon in the exigencies of national life. Society has a soul as well as a body. The traditions of a nation are part of its existence. Its valour and its discipline, its religious faith, its venerable laws, its science and erudition, its poetry, its art, its eloquence, and its scholarship, are as much portions of its life as its agriculture, its commerce, and its engineering skill. Nay, I would go further; I would say that without these qualities material excellence cannot be attained.

"But, gentlemen, the new philosophy strikes further than at the existence of

patriotism. It strikes at the home; it strikes at the individuality of man. It would reduce civilized society to human flocks and herds. That it may produce in your time much disturbance, possibly much destruction, I pretend not to deny; but I must express my conviction that it will not ultimately triumph. I hold that the main obstacles to its establishment are to be found in human nature itself. They are both physical and moral. If it be true, as I believe, that an aristocracy distinguished merely by wealth must perish from satiety, so I hold it is equally true that a people who recognize no higher aim than physical enjoyment must become selfish and enervated. Under such circumstances *the supremacy of race, which is the key of history*, will assert itself. Some human progeny, distinguished by their bodily vigour or their masculine intelligence, or by both qualities, will assert their superiority, and conquer a world which deserves to be enslaved. It will then be found that our boasted progress has only been an advancement in a circle, and that our new philosophy has brought us back to that old serfdom which it has taken ages to extirpate.

"But the still more powerful—indeed, I hold, the insurmountable—obstacle to the establishment of the new opinions will be furnished by the essential elements of the human mind. Our idiosyncrasy is not bounded by the planet which we inhabit. We can investigate space and we can comprehend eternity. No considerations limited to this sphere have hitherto furnished the excitement which man requires, or the sanctions for his conduct which his nature imperatively demands. The spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions. No government can endure which does not recognize that for its foundation, and no legislation last which does not flow from this fountain. The principle may develop itself in manifold forms—shape of many creeds and many churches; but the principle is divine. As time is divided

into day and night, so religion rests upon the providence of God and the responsibility of man. One is manifest, the other mysterious; but both are facts. Nor is there, as some would teach you, anything in these convictions which tends to contract our intelligence or our sympathies. On the contrary, *religion invigorates the intellect and expands the heart. He who has a due sense of his relations to God is best qualified to fulfil his duties to man.* A fine writer of antiquity—perhaps the finest—has recorded in a beautiful passage his belief in Divine Providence, and in the necessity of universal toleration:—

‘Εγὼ μὲν οὖν, καὶ ταῦτα, καὶ τὰ πάντ’ ἀεὶ,
Φάσκοιμ’ ἂν ἀνθρώποισι μηχανῆν θεοῦς.
“Ὅτ’ ὅς μὴ τὰδ’ ἐστὶν ἐν γνῶμῃ φίλα,
Κεῖνός τ’ ἐκείνῃ σποργέτω, καὶ γὰρ τὰδε.*

These lines were written, more than two thousand years ago, by the most Attic of Athenian poets. In the perplexities of life I have sometimes found in them a solace and a satisfaction; and I now deliver them to you, to guide your consciences and to guard your lives."

On the evening of the same day which had seen Mr. Disraeli installed as lord rector, a banquet was given by the city of Glasgow especially in the honour of the leader of the Opposition. The lord provost took the chair, and, unlike Mr. Lowe when snubbed at the Trinity House dinner for his want of tact, Mr. Disraeli carefully avoided making any political allusions. The dinner was a purely social gathering, and the health of Mr. Disraeli was drunk with much enthusiasm by the assembled guests, who were far from all holding the same political opinions. "I have always," said Mr. Disraeli in rising to return thanks, "thought it to be one of the happiest circumstances of public life in England that we have not permitted our political opinions to interfere with our social enjoy-

* "I would assuredly say that these, and all things which happen to man, are the work of a Divine power. But if any one is of another way of thinking, he may have his opinion and I will have mine."—"The Ajax" of *Sophocles*.

ments. I believe it is a characteristic of the country; at least, I am not aware that it is shared by any other. For instance, if you are on the Continent, and wish to pay your respects to a minister and go to his reception, you are invited by the minister. The consequence is you find no one there except those who follow him. It is not so in England. I remember some years ago meeting, under the charming roof of one of the most accomplished women of the time, the most celebrated diplomatist of certainly this half-century, and he said to me, 'What a wonderful system of society you have in England! I have not been on speaking terms with Lord Palmerston for three weeks, and yet here I am; but you see I am paying a visit to Lady Palmerston.'

Though Mr. Disraeli carefully avoided touching upon political topics which might give rise to dispute, he permitted himself to make one or two remarks on his connection with the Conservative party. He alluded with just pride to his having led his party for twenty-five years; "there is no record," he said, "I believe, in the parliamentary history of the country of the duration of a leadership equal to it." Sir Robert Peel had led the Tory party for eighteen years, "though unfortunately it twice broke asunder;" and Lord John Russell had led one of the great parties of the state seventeen years, "though at last it slipped out of his hands." Then, in order not to be accused of self-glorification, Mr. Disraeli thus explained why he had mentioned the subject, and by his explanation refuted many idle stories and much malicious gossip then current as to the hostility of a certain section of the Conservative party to his leadership. "Do not suppose," he said, "I make these observations in any vain spirit. The reason why I have been able to lead any party for such a period and under circumstances of some difficulty and discouragement, is that the party with which I am connected is really the most generous and the most indulgent party that ever existed. I cannot help

smiling sometimes when I hear of those convenient intimations given by those who know all the secrets of the political world, of the extreme anxiety of the Conservative party to get rid of my services. *The fact is, the Conservative party can get rid of my services whenever they give me any intimation that such is their desire.* All I can say is, whenever I have desired to relieve them of it, they have only too kindly insisted on my retaining the lead, and the only difference to me has been that they were more indulgent and more kind. I will not trespass on the rule of the evening by making any further political allusion, but I hope you will allow me to think that I was justified in making these remarks."

Addressing a commercial audience in one of the greatest commercial cities in the world at a time when—owing to the vast sums paid by France to Germany, and the German demand for the establishment of a gold coinage—the money market was somewhat agitated, Mr. Disraeli briefly touched upon the subject. He did not, he remarked, observe that there were any symptoms in the country of reckless speculation, or any circumstances which could justify the alarm that there was to be a collapse in English commercial prosperity. He attributed the great monetary disturbance that had occurred, to the great changes which the governments in Europe were making to establish a uniform gold standard of value, since they declared that the prosperity of England was due to her gold standard. "Now, our gold standard is," he said, "an invaluable arrangement. I think that any country which has a gold standard of value, should, to use a celebrated expression, think once, twice, and thrice before it gives it up. But it is the greatest delusion in the world to attribute the commercial preponderance and prosperity of England to our having a gold standard. Our gold standard is not the cause of our commercial prosperity, but the consequence of our commercial prosperity; and it is very well for us to have it: but you cannot establish a gold

standard by violent means. It must arise gradually from the large transactions of the country, and the consequent command it may have over the precious metals. When the various states of Europe suddenly determined to have a gold standard,* and took steps to carry it into effect, it was quite evident we must prepare ourselves for convulsions in the money market, not occasioned by speculation or any old cause which has been alleged, but by a new cause with which we are not yet sufficiently acquainted, and the consequences of which are very embarrassing; and that is the reason I have taken the opportunity of calling your attention to it.

"Take the case of Germany. At this moment it is most remarkable, when there has been such a want of a gold standard in various parts of Europe, and even in England, where the strain has been so great, Germany has at this moment £50,000,000 sterling of gold coin virtually locked up; and it is locked up because it is the object of Germany to substitute a gold coinage for a silver coinage. While it has £50,000,000 value in gold coinage locked up, it has £80,000,000 or £90,000,000 of silver circulating, and they know very well, if they were to attempt to substitute violently the gold for the silver coinage—£50,000,000 of gold against £90,000,000 of silver—the consequence would be that the silver, already reduced in value, would become reduced still more, and the £50,000,000 of gold would all leave Germany. The consequence is that Germany is taking violent steps to get rid of this silver. The other day Germany sent a large amount of silver to Calcutta, and Germany could only by artificial means transmit it. The result was for a considerable time you could not buy a single bill on England. These are all circumstances calculated to disturb the course of commerce and manufacturing arrangements.

* A commission had been sitting at Paris, at the time of the Great Exhibition, with the object of establishing a uniform coinage throughout the world.

"Then, again, take the case of France and America, which are floating on inconvertible paper; but France has also at this moment £90,000,000 sterling in silver coin. What must be the position of France with all her silver already depreciated, if Germany, to establish a gold standard, forces her own silver into France? France would be in a position of much embarrassment, and would make violent efforts to establish as soon as she can a gold coinage at any cost. Vast disturbance and fluctuations must arise from such circumstances. I regret to treat matters of this kind at a moment like this, because they require to be treated with more precision of language and with greater patience than either I or you can afford at this moment, but it did appear to me a subject to which I ought to call your attention.

"You are commercial men, interested in the monetary system of the world; you ought to have your eye carefully upon the efforts which are making to establish a gold standard of value in Germany, in France, and, soon you will find, also in America. Legally, of course, there is a gold standard in America, but virtually there is not. Holland and all the Scandinavian states have also established a gold standard, probably to protect themselves from a depreciated currency; and when countries inundated with silver are trying to get rid of it, convulsions must come, and no one would be able to form an adequate idea of the monetary arrangements of the times in which he lives if he omits from his consideration the circumstances to which I have called your attention. I have drawn your attention to it to-day because you must know it is very difficult for me to address you under the conditions in which we meet. Munificent as is your hospitality, and cordial as may be your reception, it would scarcely do that our meeting to-day should be a mere interchange of compliments. To a certain degree that is very agreeable; one glass of liqueur is appropriate, but none of you would like to dine off

a bottle of maraschino. A famous monarch, King Louis Philippe, once said to me that he attributed the great success of the British nation in political life to their talking politics after dinner. Gentlemen, unfortunately, to-day that is the only subject on which I may not enter, and therefore I hope that will be some excuse if I have touched on a question which is not a party question."

Before sitting down Mr. Disraeli expressed to his guests how gratified he had been at the reception accorded to him. He then concluded by indulging in one of those personal reminiscences which are always interesting when revealed by the distinguished. "It is my first visit to your city. I think it is nearly half a century since I first visited Scotland. I remember it well, not only because I saw for the first time a memorable country, but because I made the personal acquaintance and became the guest of one of the best and greatest of men, the Lord of Abbotsford. He was a friend of my father, and he received me with that kindness which the illustrious do not, unfortunately, always bestow on the young. I remember walking with him in those new plantations of which he was so proud, by the banks of that river Tweed which he loved so well. He poured out all the treasures of his fancy and his memory, all the fire and music of his mind; he took as much pains to interest and entertain me as if, instead of being an unknown youth, I had been the lord rector of a famous university. That was the good-nature of the man, which was as great as his genius.

"How much has happened in those fifty years—a period more remarkable than any, I will venture to say, in the annals of mankind! I am not thinking of the rise and fall of empires, the change of dynasties, the establishment of governments. I am thinking of those revolutions of science, which have had much more effect than any political causes; which have changed the position and prospects of mankind more than all the conquests and all the codes of all the conquerors and all the legislators

that ever existed. In that time, gentlemen, you and your society have not been idle. You have raised your town to a position among the great cities of the world. Long may you retain that position; long may you retain that energy which has rendered your Clyde as famous as the Thames and the Seine; long may your factories be full of creative life; long may you appropriate the metallic treasures of your teeming soil; long may your docks and harbours receive and furnish navies. Under Divine Providence that prosperity will remain, if you retain your public spirit. That depends upon your patriotism and your self-respect, and those sentiments can never in the British isles assume a more legitimate and fairer form than when they take the shape of loyalty and freedom. Gentlemen, I drink to your healths—all."

It is not every day that a provincial city has the honour of entertaining a visitor who is at the same time a distinguished man of letters, an eminent statesman, and the leader of a great political party, and the good people of Glasgow certainly could not be accused of coldness or neglect towards their guest. The week spent within the city was a busy one for Mr. Disraeli. No sooner had he been installed as lord rector of the university and entertained at dinner, than he was presented with the freedom of the city of Glasgow in a gold box. In his brief reply on the occasion Mr. Disraeli modestly stated that such an honour had been conferred on him, not because he was an author or a politician, but because he was connected with the University of Glasgow. It was a proof of the sympathy which subsisted between the city and the university. "Gentlemen," he said (November 20, 1873), "I look upon that connection between the city and the University of Glasgow as a most valuable one, and which should be ever cherished. There is not any city connected with a university which has not become illustrious. The mutual influence of both institutions is most beneficial. On

the one hand, it softens the habits of those who are devoted to the busy purposes of life; while the contiguity of the university to a great city like Glasgow, infuses a knowledge of the world which those who are secluded in cloisters cannot command. I am happy to remember that this connection of affection between these two great institutions has always prevailed. I have certainly read, at least, in works of the last century, that there existed in this city an example of a commercial and literary association, which may, perhaps, even now survive, which was illustrious from its members, and in which the merchants of Glasgow met names not second to any in the roll of British worthies. Adam Smith, known to the whole world as the highest authority on one of the highest of subjects; celebrated men of science; philosophers, like the ingenious Reid and the illustrious Hutchinson—were members of that association, and exercised their influence upon the public mind and spirit of this community. Nor need I remind you that the connection with the university has not been wanting in material advantage to this great city. The discoveries of philosophers in the university have influenced most advantageously the material fortunes of Glasgow. I need not allude to the inventions of Black and others, which you have carried into practice, and which have given such an impetus to your industrial life; but I may perhaps be permitted to say, as lord rector of the university, that it would be most delightful to me if I could hear of some public acknowledgment on the part of some distinguished citizen of Glasgow on that subject, so that I might see the hall of our university raised with becoming splendour from the ground which is, unfortunately, now unoccupied.

"I have observed that it is characteristic, a happy characteristic, of the age in which we live that men become their own executors, and I should be delighted to hear of some munificent endowment which would place

our university in the position which it deserves. I feel confidence in appealing to the wealthy citizens of this opulent city, because it is, after all, in cities that enlightenment looks for its natural home; it is here, as it is in great cities, especially those that have been intellectually influenced by the existence of universities, that we find letters, and arts, and science flourish. The city, indeed, is the natural home of civilization. It is in cities that have been discovered those inventions which have given an impulse to the education of the human mind. Priests and princes may have devised hieroglyphics and cuneiform writing; but nobody will deny that the alphabet was invented by merchants and manufacturers. Therefore, gentlemen, I trust that my election to the great office to which I have been raised may not be any impediment to the natural flow of the dispositions of the citizens of Glasgow, and that during the period that I may exercise any influence over the conduct of the university it will not be recorded as one in which it made no advance in its material fortunes.

"Now, my lord provost and gentlemen, let me offer you my thanks for the distinction which you have conferred on me to-day. There is nothing which animates public men more than the prospect that they may obtain the sympathy and respect of their fellow-citizens. It is acts like these, and scenes like these, that sustain men in the turmoil and struggle of public life. Here we meet that approbation which is the great meed of public efforts; to live in the affections and afterwards in the memory of our fellow-subjects is what every man looks to as the chief object of his career. I shall not forget the new position which I have occupied this day. I shall show at all times, not only that I am proud of the distinction which you have conferred upon me, but that I am faithful to the duties which it entails; and if ever the rights and interests of the city of Glasgow are invaded or imperilled, there will be at least, I assure

you, one burgess on whose efforts to maintain them you need not fail to rely."

Mr. Disraeli was, however, not to be denied the pleasure of delivering a political speech whilst staying in Glasgow. From this welcome task he had been debarred in his address to the students. He had carefully avoided politics when entertained at dinner by a mixed company. It did not fall within his province to touch upon the subject when presented with the freedom of the city; but an excellent opportunity now offered itself, and it was instantly accepted. Among those societies which have for their object the spread of Conservative opinions, the strengthening and developing of Conservative constituencies, and the maintenance of Conservative organization, the Conservative Association of Glasgow is among the most ardent and active. As we have before had occasion to remark, the creed of Conservatism is not the popular faith north of the Tweed; still where it flourishes it takes deep root in the soil, and is rich and healthy in the fruit it produces. For much of this fertility, the ardour and loyalty of societies similar to the Conservative Association of Glasgow is answerable. Without the encouragement and the political instruction offered by these active communities, Scottish Conservatism would rapidly lose its animating spirit and the vigour of its coherence, and soon fall into confusion, and perhaps into decay. It was only natural that on so important an occasion as the visit of the chieftain of the party to their city, that the Glasgow Conservative Association should avail itself of the moment to express its confidence in the policy and principles of Mr. Disraeli. Accordingly, an address was drawn up, a meeting was convened, and after the flattering document had been perused and received Mr. Disraeli rose up to return his thanks (November 22, 1873).

After a few introductory remarks he plunged into the middle of things by criticising the government. The ministers, he said, had lost few opportunities

of informing the country that they were men distinguished for commanding talent, admirable eloquence, and transcendent administrative abilities. He disputed none of those propositions, any more than he did the prosperity of the country. Ministers also stated that the country being so prosperous, and they having all those personal advantages, they had taken the opportunity during the last few years of passing measures of immense magnitude, only equalled by the benefit they had conferred upon the people. He did not question the estimate arrived at by ministers of their ability, or even for a moment their own description of their achievements; but he wanted to know what was the reason, when the country was so prosperous, when its affairs were administered by so gifted a government, and when they had succeeded during five years in passing measures so vast and beneficent—what was the reason that Her Majesty's ministers were going about regretting that they were so unpopular? That question, said Mr. Disraeli, he had answered in his letter to Lord Grey de Wilton, which had caused so much comment. He defended that letter.* Ministers might sigh and newspapers scream, but the question was, was the statement a true one?

"You cannot answer statements of this kind," he remarked, "by saying 'Oh, fie! how very rude.' You must at least adduce arguments, in order to prove that the statement which you do not sanction is one that ought not to have been made. And therefore I ask you to-day, in the first place, is it or is not true that the Irish Church has been despoiled? Is it or is it not true that the gentlemen of Ireland have been severely amerced? Is it or is it not true that a royal commission has been issued which has dealt with the ancient endowments of this country in so ruthless a manner that parliament has frequently been

* No Conservative complained that the charges brought forward in the "Bath letter" were untrue; it was made a matter of complaint by some that such charges were unwise to advance at a time when the votes of wavering Liberals might have been useful.

called upon to interfere, and has addressed the crown to arrest their propositions? Are these facts or are they not?

"Well, I did then venture to say that the ministers had 'harassed trades and worried professions,' as reasons why men naturally become unpopular. Was that true or was it not? Because, after all, everything depends on the facts of the statement. I will not enter into a long catalogue of trades, commencing with the important trade [the iron trade] of which we have heard so much, and which has made itself felt at so many elections, down to the humblest trade—the lucifer-match makers who fell upon their knees in Palace Yard. I suppose there are some Scotch farmers present, or at least those who are intimately connected with them. I want to know whether their trade was harassed when a proposition was brought before the House of Commons to tax their carts and horses, and all the machinery of their cultivation!* I know how the proposition was received in England, and I doubt not the Scotch farmers, like the English, felt extremely harassed by it. I want to know what is the reason why there is this crusade throughout the country against Schedule D of the income tax. The income tax has been borne for thirty years with great self-sacrifice, and endured with great loyalty by the people of this country. It is at this moment at the lowest pitch it ever reached; how is it, then, that it is at this moment more unpopular than it was at any time during the long period we endured it, and at a much higher figure? It is on account of the assessment of the trades of England under that schedule. It is the vexatious and severe assessment that has harassed all trades under that Act, who are not particularly pleased when, after paying five quarters of income tax in one year, they learn also that they are in arrears.

"Then have the professions been worried? Is it not true that at this moment a royal

commission is examining in London into the grievances of 6000 officers? Ask the naval profession whether they have not been worried. During the course of the present government the whole administrative system of the admiralty, the council that had always a wise and vast influence in the management of the navy, and the peculiar and important office of the secretary, were all swept away; and in spite, I may say, of the nightly warnings of a right hon. friend of mine,† now lost to us all and his country, the ablest minister of the admiralty during the present reign—notwithstanding his nightly warnings that they were so conducting the administration of the navy that they would probably fall into some disaster. His remonstrances were in vain; and it was not till the most costly vessel of the state foundered, and the perilous voyage of the *McJara* had been made, that the country resolved to stand it no longer: they rescinded the whole of this worrying arrangement, and appointed a new first lord to re-establish the old system. Is that worrying a profession, or is it not?

"Well, gentlemen, I can speak of another profession—a profession not the least considerable in the state—the civil service profession. Has it been worried, or is it now in a process of worrying, or is it not? There are many even in this room well acquainted with the civil service in all its departments. Let them decide. I might say the same of the legal profession, for I have heard the lawyers on both sides of the House, in the debates of last session, agree in imploring the government not to continue propositions which would infallibly weaken the administration of justice in this country. But with professions and trades it is not merely those directly attacked, but it is every one that is harassed and worried, because no one knows whose turn will come next."

Was it not true then, asked Mr. Disraeli,

* In his budget of 1871 Mr. Gladstone had proposed "to tax the machinery employed in

had proposed "to tax a of the said."

† The Right Hon. E. J. Cory. Mr. Cory was a lord of the admiralty in 1841-42, secretary of the admiralty in 1842-43 and in 1843-44, and first lord of the admiralty in 1844-45. He died February, 1872.

that ministers had attacked every class and institution, from the highest to the lowest in the country? And had not jobs been perpetrated that outraged public opinion? Was it not the fact that two years ago public opinion was outraged by persons being appointed to important offices in church and state in direct violation of the language of Acts of Parliament? that a dispensing power in that respect was exercised by the minister—that dispensing power which forfeited the crown of James II.? Was not public indignation roused to the highest pitch upon the Collier appointment? Were those acts perpetrated or not, and did they outrage public opinion? Every one knew that public opinion was outraged.

"Now, I have given an answer," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli triumphantly, "to the question why the government, with transcendent abilities, as they tell us, with magnificent exploits which they are always extolling, and with a country whose prosperity is so palpable, are unpopular. I tell them why. They have harassed and worried the country, and there was no necessity for any of the acts they have committed. I have put it in condensed and, I am sure, accurate language. There was a celebrated writer [Dean Swift], one of the greatest masters of our language, who wrote the history of the last four years of the reign of Queen Anne, which was the duration of an illustrious ministry. I have written the history of a ministry that has lasted five years, and I have immortalized the spirit of their policy in five lines."

He then turned the attention of his audience to the business which would engage the government at the reassembling of parliament. War had broken out with the Ashantees, and that, he supposed, would be the first topic brought forward. As yet upon that subject his mouth was closed. "The time will come," he said, "no doubt, when we shall know something of the secret history of that mysterious mess of the Ashantee war; but we have now but

one duty to fulfil, which is to give every assistance to the government in order that they may take those steps which the interests of the country require. I should, indeed, myself, from my own individual experience, be most careful not to follow the example which one of the most distinguished members of the present administration pursued with respect to us when we had to encounter the Abyssinian difficulty. Mr. Lowe thought proper to rise in parliament, when I introduced the necessity of interference in order to escape from difficulties which we had inherited and not made—Mr. Lowe rose in parliament and violently attacked the government of the day for the absurdity, the folly, the extreme imprudence of attempting any interference in the affairs of Abyssinia. He laughed at the honour of the country, he laughed at the interests of a few enslaved subjects of the Queen of England being compared, as he said, with the certain destruction and disaster which must attend any interference on our part. He described the horrors of the country and the terrors of the clime. He said there was no possibility by which any success could be obtained, and the people of England must prepare themselves for a horrible catastrophe. He described not only the fatal influences of the climate, but I remember he described one pink fly alone, which, he said, would eat up the whole British army. He was as vituperative of the insects of Abyssinia as if they had been British workmen."

Then, discussing the question of further parliamentary reform which had been hinted at by the government, Mr. Disraeli denied the necessity for any such measure.

"I think I may say without conceit," he said, "that the subject of parliamentary reform is one that I am entitled to speak upon at least with some degree of authority. I have given to it the consideration of some forty years, and am responsible for the most important measure on the subject that has been carried. I would say this, that it is impossible to go further in the direction

of parliamentary reform than the bill of 1867-68, without entirely subverting the whole of the borough representation of this country. I do not mean to say that, if there was a place disfranchised to-morrow for corruption, it would not be possible to enfranchise a very good place in its stead; but, speaking generally, you cannot go beyond the Act of 1867 without making up your mind entirely to break up the borough representation of this country. The people of Great Britain ought to be aware that that is the necessary consequence."

Mr. Disraeli next touched upon the relations between capital and labour, and between the employers and the employed, which caused him some uneasiness. If there were any relations in the world, he remarked, which should be those of sympathy and perfect confidence, they were the relations which should subsist between employers and employed, and especially in manufacturing life. They were, in fact, much more intimate and more necessary relations than those which subsisted between landlords and tenants. It was an extremely painful thing, he said, that of late years they so frequently heard of misunderstandings between the employers and the employed—that they looked upon each other with suspicion—with mutual suspicion—as if each were rapaciously inclined either to obtain or retain the greater share of the profits of their trade—a condition of things which eventually resulted in strikes.

"Now I am not talking," he continued, "of demands for an increase of wages when men are carrying on what is called a roaring trade—I believe that is the classical epithet. When a roaring trade is going on, I am not at all surprised that working men should ask for an increase of wages. But the trade sometimes ceases to roar, when wages naturally, on the same principle, assume a form more adapted to the circumstances. But, no doubt, during the last twenty years there appears to have been not a permanent and temporary cause of dis-

turbance, like the incidents of trade being very active or reduced, but some permanent cause disturbing prices, which alike confuses the employer in his calculations as to profits, and embarrasses the employed from the greater expenditure which they find it necessary to make. Now, I cannot but feel myself—having given to the subject some consideration—I cannot help feeling that the large and continuous increase of the precious metals, especially during the last twenty years, has certainly produced no inconsiderable effect on prices.

"I will not on an occasion like this enter into anything like an abstruse discussion. I confine myself to giving my opinion and the results, and this moral, which I think is worthy of consideration. If it can be shown accurately and scientifically that there is a cause affecting a prominent class, reducing the average remuneration of the employed, and confusing and confounding the employer in his calculations as to profits—if that can be shown, and if it is proved to be the result of inexorable laws far beyond the reach of legislatures, and of circumstances over which human beings have no control—I think if that could be shown, and employers and employed had sufficient acuteness and knowledge—and I am sure that in Scotland there is no lack of both—it would very much change those mutual feelings of suspicion and sentiments of a not pleasant character which occasionally prevail when they find that they are both of them the victims, as it were, of some inexorable law of public economy which cannot be resisted. I think, instead of supposing that each wanted to take advantage of the other, they would feel inclined to put their shoulders to the wheel, accurately ascertain whether this be true, and come to some understanding which would very much mitigate the relations which subsist between them. I have little doubt the effect would be to increase the average rate of wages, with my views as to the effect of the continuous increase of the precious metals. But, at the same

time, I have not the slightest doubt the employer would, in the nature of things, find adequate compensation for the new position in which he would find himself."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded:—"There is one point, before I sit down, to which I wish to call your attention. Because, if I am correct in saying that the question of the relations between the employer and employed is the only one that gives me anxiety at home, there is a subject abroad to which I think I ought, on an occasion like this, to draw your notice; and that is the contest that is commencing in Europe between the spiritual and temporal power. I look upon it as very grave, as pregnant with circumstances which may greatly embarrass Europe. A religious sentiment is often and generally taken advantage of by political causes which use it as a pretext; and there is much going on in Europe at the present moment which, it appears to me, may occasion soon much anxiety in this community. I should myself look upon it as the greatest danger to civilization if, in the struggle that is going on between faith and free-thought, the respective sides should only be represented by the Papacy and the Red Republic. And here I must say that if we have before us the prospect of struggles—perhaps ultimately of wars and anarchy—caused by the struggle now rising in Europe, it will not easily be in the power of England entirely to stand apart. *Our connection with Ireland will then be brought*

painfully to our consciousness, and I should not be at all surprised if the visor of Home Rule should fall off some day and you beheld a very different countenance.

"Now, I think, we ought to be prepared for these events. The position of England is one which is indicated, if dangers arise, of holding a middle course upon these matters. It may be open to England again to take her stand upon the Reformation, which 300 years ago was the source of her greatness and her glory; and it may be her proud destiny to guard civilization alike *from the withering blast of atheism and from the simoon of sacerdotal usurpation.* These things may be far off, but we live in a rapid age, and my apprehension is that they are nearer than some suppose. If that struggle comes we must look to Scotland to aid us. It was once, and I hope is still, a land of liberty, of patriotism, and of religion. I think the time has come when it really should leave off *mumbling the dry bones of political economy, and munching the remainder biscuit of an effete Liberalism.* We all know that a general election is at hand. I do not ask you to consider on such an occasion the fate of parties or of ministers. But I ask you to consider this, that it is very probable that the future of Europe may depend greatly on the character of the next parliament of England. I ask you, when the occasion comes, to act as becomes an ancient and famous nation, and give all your energies for the cause of faith and freedom."

CHAPTER X.

RESTORED TO POWER.

THE leadership of the Opposition was now to fall into other hands. Mr. Gladstone had passed a doleful and anxious Christmas. At every contested election a Conservative headed the poll—a fact which indicated that the tide of popular feeling had now definitely turned against a Liberal policy. The prime minister was undecided what course to adopt. In spite of defeat after defeat he declined to believe that these isolated cases of Conservative triumph represented the general views of the nation, but felt sure that if the country were appealed to in a body he would once again be returned to office with a powerful majority. Still he was opposed to the idea of a dissolution at that moment, knowing the inconvenience it would occasion his followers, and so finally buoyed himself up with the hope that the financial schemes he was about to bring forward would be instrumental in reorganizing his majority and in propitiating the House and the people in his favour. Parliament was to meet in the first week of February, and the day was rapidly approaching for that event without any symptoms occurring of there being any obstacle to the programme that had been arranged. Ministers were quitting their country houses, or hurrying home from the Continent; members were coming up one after the other to town; the clubs were full, and a busy session was anticipated.

Suddenly the government changed their tactics. It would appear as if Mr. Gladstone had required something definite to take place which was to help him out of his state of indecision, and serve as a guide to his future plan of action. That clue, he considered, had now been given. A vacancy had occurred in the representation of Stroud,

and the rival parties were straining every nerve to secure the seat. By a tacit sort of understanding throughout the country, the result of the contest was to be typical of the political views of the people: if a Liberal was returned, the nation was still in favour of Liberalism; if, on the other hand, a Conservative was the victor, the reaction had set in, and the government was in a minority. To the delight of the Opposition, though the borough had hitherto been Liberal, a Conservative was returned by a large majority. At the same time, whilst political feeling was absorbed in the condition of things in the west of England, events were happening in the north very significant of the change that was now apparent. The death of Sir Joseph Cowen had created a vacancy in the great commercial borough of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The town had always been in favour of the Liberal interest, and at the last election a Conservative had been defeated by more than 4000 votes. The son of Sir Joseph now offered himself as a candidate, and was returned; but the once immense Liberal majority had dwindled down to little more than 1000. These two events appeared to have created a deep impression upon Mr. Gladstone, and to have forced his hand. With no preparatory hints of the course he intended to pursue, he suddenly issued his address, announcing the dissolution of parliament. The address was dated January 23, 1874, and to the intense surprise of the country, appeared in the newspapers of the following day.

This vain and verbose composition fully justified Mr. Disraeli entitling it as "a prolix narrative," since it filled three

columns of an ordinary morning journal. It was addressed to the constituents of Greenwich, and gave the reasons which had induced the prime minister to make a general appeal to the country. It reviewed the past acts of the government, and claimed credit for the measures that had become law. It gave the history of the last session, and stated that ministers had come to the conclusion that it was unadvisable to carry on further work without a fresh access of strength. "The question," it said, "whether members ought to retain or to abandon office should be decided by a general election, with the opportunity which it affords for broad declarations of policy and issues truly national, and cannot be satisfactorily solved by isolated contests, of which the issue is in a greater degree dependent on close discipline and finished and concentrated organization." Then came the bribery clauses, which were to propitiate the country and buy the favour of the people. If the Liberals were returned to power, it was promised in the address that local taxation should be diminished, the odious income tax wholly repealed, and numerous taxes remitted—reliefs which could be carried out owing to the large surplus in hand, and by the readjustment of taxation. It was also hinted that changes, if thought desirable, might be effected in the franchise, the land laws, the game laws, the licensing laws, the Education Act, and the laws affecting trades unions. The address then closed with a panegyric upon the labours of the Liberal party during the last forty years. "I am confident," said Mr. Gladstone, "that if now the present government be dismissed from the service of their gracious mistress and of the country, the Liberal party, which they represent, may at least challenge contradiction when they say that their term of forty years leaves the throne, the laws, and the institutions of the country not weaker, but stronger than it found them."

The address, even by the supporters of

Mr. Gladstone, was considered a mistake. It was said that the prime minister should have met parliament, should have definitely introduced his financial schemes, and have carried out his reforms, and then have appealed to the country. Had that course been taken the people would have known exactly what was the policy of the government, instead of being asked to decide upon vague and indefinite proposals.

Mr. Disraeli was not slow to take up the challenge of his antagonist. In his address to the electors of the county of Buckingham he replied to the appeal of the prime minister. "The prime minister," he said, "has addressed to his constituents a prolix narrative, in which he mentions many of the questions that have occupied, or may occupy, public attention, but in which I find nothing definite as to the policy he would pursue except this, that having the prospect of a large surplus he will, if retained in power, devote that surplus to the remission of taxation, which would be the course of any party or any ministry. But what is remarkable in his proposals is that, on the one hand, they are accompanied by the disquieting information that the surplus, in order to make it adequate, must be enlarged by an 'adjustment,' which must mean an increase of existing taxes; and that, on the other hand, his principal measures of relief will be the diminution of local taxation and the abolition of the income tax—measures which the Conservatives have always favoured, and which the prime minister and his friends have always opposed." If returned to parliament, continued Mr. Disraeli, he would endeavour to support all measures calculated to improve the condition of the people. "But I do not think," he said, "this great end is advanced by incessant and harassing legislation. The English people are governed by their customs as much as by their laws, and there is nothing they more dislike than unnecessary restraint and meddling interference in their affairs. Generally speaking, I should say of the administration of the

last five years that it would have been better for us all if there had been *a little more energy in our foreign policy, and a little less in our domestic legislation.*"

Mr. Disraeli then blamed the "equivocal and entangling engagements" which had involved the country in the Ashantee war, and considered that any question of a further reform of the House of Commons was both unwise and unnecessary. There had always been, he said, a difference between the franchises of the two divisions of the country, and no one had argued more strongly against the identity of suffrage than Mr. Gladstone. The late Reform Act was a large measure, which, in conjunction with the ballot, had scarcely been tested by experience; and the Conservative party, which had proved that it was not afraid of popular rights, would oppose further legislation, which, if sanctioned, would amongst other changes disfranchise at the least all boroughs with less than 40,000 inhabitants. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Disraeli, in conclusion, "the impending general election is one of no mean importance for the future character of this kingdom. There is reason to hope from the address of the prime minister, putting aside some ominous suggestions which it contains as to the expediency of a local and subordinate legislature, that he is not certainly, at present, opposed to our national institutions or to the maintenance of the integrity of the empire. But unfortunately among his adherents some assail the monarchy, others impugn the independence of the House of Lords, while there are those who would relieve parliament altogether from any share in the government of one portion of the United Kingdom. Others, again, urge him to pursue his peculiar policy by disestablishing the Anglican as he has despoiled the Irish Church; while trusted colleagues in his cabinet openly concur with them in their desire to thrust religion from the place which it ought to occupy in national education. These, gentlemen, are solemn issues, and the impending general election

must decide them. Their solution must be arrived at when Europe is more deeply stirred than at any period since the Reformation, and when the cause of civil liberty and religious freedom mainly depends upon the strength and stability of England. I ask you to return me to the House of Commons to resist every proposal which may impair that strength, and to support by every means her imperial sway."

During the next few weeks the country was under the influence of the stir and turmoil of a general election. As the struggle between the Liberal parties proceeded, it soon became evident how false had been the move made by the prime minister. No one was prepared for a dissolution, and those who found themselves suddenly called upon to fight for their seats were loud in their denunciations of this sudden resolve sprung upon them by Mr. Gladstone, and cordially agreed with Mr. Disraeli that such conduct was "un-English." The Conservatives, thanks to their perfect system of organization, were not taken unawares, and had everything in order to give battle. Their ranks were full, their discipline was excellent, and their "cry" appealed to the people. On the other hand, the Liberals were at a disadvantage. They were not ready with their candidates, their canvassing lists had not been drawn up, and their camp was weakened by divisions. The dissenting interest, dissatisfied with the Education Act, pledged itself not to vote for any candidate who was not in favour of universal school-boards, of one board school in each school district, and the unconditional repeal of clause twenty-five. At the same time the licensed victuallers, irritated with the schemes of the late home secretary, went over bodily to the Conservative party. Thus became cemented that union, which was so much derided at the time, between "beer and the Bible." The conduct of the Dissenters in advocating a purely secular education alienated many Liberals from the party who were in favour of scriptural teaching.

and greatly strengthened the hands of the Conservatives. From the very commencement of hostilities the issue of the struggle was evident. On the side of the Conservatives were those who ordinarily constituted the supporters of the party, and, in addition, all who advocated Bible education as against secular instruction, together with that immense community connected with the manufacture and sale of malt liquor. Against this consolidated and aggressive force was the ministerialist party, unprepared and discouraged, stripped of numbers of its followers to whom its economical reductions had been inimical, and weakened by the tactics of the discontented Dissenters.

Mr. Disraeli was busy in his own county addressing his constituents. He had no fears as to his seat, and he saw that office would soon be his lot. "The county of Bucks," he said, "has always been a political county, and I hope it will maintain its reputation in that respect. Since the accession of the house of Hanover there have been thirty prime ministers, and five of them have been supplied by the county of Buckingham. Surely, then, there must be something in the air of Buckinghamshire that is favourable to the growth of prime ministers." He was in a few days to find that air very favourable. In the different speeches Mr. Disraeli made at that time it was not difficult for him cruelly to expose the mismanagement of affairs during the mischievous reign of the Gladstone administration. He condemned the confusion and poltroonery with which the foreign policy of the Liberals had been conducted; he found fault with the reductions that had been carried out only at the expense of efficiency, and with the whole system of the past financial policy. Upon the latter point he spoke with much sound sense. He would not discuss what should be done with the vaunted surplus until it had been realized; but he was strongly opposed to the repeal of the income tax in order that new taxes should be levied, which he supposed was the interpretation

of Mr. Gladstone's "readjustment of taxation." It was a policy which he could not recommend. "Let us first realize the surplus," he said. "Let the financial year be terminated. Let us see what we have in hand, and let us distribute those means in a manner which we think most advantageous to the country."

His condemnation of the policy of "economy" which Mr. Gladstone had instituted should not be passed over. "All ministers of all parties," said Mr. Disraeli, "are in favour of economy, but a great deal depends upon what you mean by economy. I venture to say, that I do not believe you can have economical government in any country in which the chief minister piques himself upon disregarding the interests of this country abroad, because such neglect must inevitably lead us into expenditure, and an expenditure of the kind over which we have the least control. We are in the habit of hearing it said (and nothing is more true) that the most economical government we ever had was the Duke of Wellington's—and why was it? It was because the Duke of Wellington paid the greatest possible attention, more than any minister who ever ruled in this country, to the interests and position of England abroad. . . . But Mr. Gladstone's view of economy, or rather the view of his own party and of the school which he represents, is of another kind. He says—'The English people do not care for their affairs abroad. I don't much care for them myself, but I must have economy. I must discharge dockyard workmen. I must reduce clerks. I must sell the queen's stores. I must starve the queen's services. I must sell the accumulations of timber in the dockyards and arsenals. I must sell all the anchors belonging to the navy. I must sell'—which we were selling for the first year or two—'half the ships in the navy. And this is economy.' But allow me to say that when Mr. Goschen the other day, in addressing his constituents, as a sort of defence of the government, said that the

expenditure upon the Ashantee war was not more than a million, one could not help reflecting that perhaps all the discharged dockyard labourers, all the reductions of clerks, would not pay the interest upon that million which had been wasted entirely by a mistake of the government. I say a mistake of the government, because Mr. Gladstone himself said 'we had involved ourselves in equivocal and entangling engagements, and by that means we got into the Ashantee war, and I hope it will be a lesson to us.' But who involved us in 'equivocal and entangling engagements?' The minister who made this arrangement. He condemns himself from his own mouth. He ought not to have involved us in equivocal and entangling engagements. If you employ a person in your business as a traveller, or if any of the farmers in this room sent a person to act for him in some distant market to buy stock—we will say in Scotland—and he came back and told you, 'I have bought the stock, but I have bought it with equivocal and entangling engagements,' what would you say? You would say, 'This will never do;' and when you began to rate your agent for getting you into equivocal and entangling engagements, would it be any answer if he said, 'Oh, I am sorry for this: it will be a lesson to me for the future; but I assure you I have been most economical in my personal expenses. I have always travelled by a second-class train; and as for any refreshments on the road, I have taken the temperance pledge?' And that is the economy of which Mr. Gladstone is so proud!"

By the middle of February the elections were over. The fears of those who had opposed the introduction of the ballot had been to some extent realized. Riots had broken out in various parts of the country. At Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, the disturbance was only suppressed by the interposition of the military and police; in North Durham, at Barnsley, at Dudley, at Newcastle in Staffordshire, at Nottingham, and at various places in the

"Black Country," stormy scenes had ensued. In Ireland, also, there were several serious struggles. The ballot, however, contrary to the expectation of its friends, had proved itself unfavourable to the Liberal cause. The result of the electoral contest gave a majority of fifty to the Conservative party. In the face of such a verdict it was impossible for Mr. Gladstone to think of carrying on the government. Imitating the precedent set by Mr. Disraeli in 1868, he resolved to tender his resignation before the meeting of parliament. Mr. Disraeli was sent for, and at once set about to form an administration.

The cabinet was a strong one, and with the exception of Mr. Cross, consisted of those who had held office on former occasions. Mr. Disraeli was, of course, first lord of the treasury; Lord Cairns was intrusted with the great seal; Lord Derby was at the foreign office; Lord Salisbury at the India office; Lord Carnarvon at the colonial office; Mr. Gathorne Hardy at the war office; Mr. Cross at the home office; Mr. Ward Hunt was first lord of the admiralty; Sir Stafford Northcote was chancellor of the exchequer; Lord John Manners was postmaster-general; the Duke of Richmond was president of the council; and the privy seal was held by Lord Malmesbury. It will be noticed that the chief secretary for Ireland, the presidents of the board of trade and of the local government board, and the vice-president of the council on education, who had been members of the cabinet under the administration of Mr. Gladstone, were excluded by Mr. Disraeli.

The other members of the ministry were selected with equal judgment, and their appointments gave full confidence to the country. Sir Charles Adderley was at the board of trade; Lord Henry Lennox was chief commissioner of works; Lord Sandon was vice-president of the council on education; Mr. Selater-Booth was president of the local government board; the Duke of Abercorn was lord-lieutenant of

Ireland; and Sir Michael Hicks Beach was chief secretary. The law advisers of the crown were Sir John Karslake and Sir Richard Baggallay.

Parliament met March 5, 1874, and Mr. Brand was unanimously re-elected as speaker. A few days later the speech from the throne was read by the lord chancellor. It contained little of great importance. It alluded to the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh with the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia, to the conclusion of the Ashantee war, and to the terrible famine then devastating certain provinces of India. As to the legislation that was to be effected, measures were to be introduced to facilitate the transfer of land, and to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors, whilst a royal commission was to be appointed to inquire into the working of the Act affecting the relationship of master and servant. In the debate on the address Mr. Disraeli took part, though his remarks do not call for any special mention.

One of the first matters which occupied the attention of the new prime minister was the vote of thanks accorded to the troops engaged in the late Ashantee war. Owing to the generalship displayed by Sir Garnet Wolseley, the hostilities against the natives had been brilliantly conducted and rapidly carried through. It was necessary to expedite proceedings in order to avoid being overtaken by the fell summer climate; the troops were hurried into the interior, and the capital of the king of Ashantee was soon a mass of charred ruin. As the fall of Magdala had put an end to the Abyssinian war, so the fall of Coomassie ended the Ashantee war; and all that now remained was to give praise and rewards to those who had specially distinguished themselves in the campaign. In moving the vote of thanks (March 30, 1874) Mr. Disraeli sketched the history of the expedition, and passed high praise upon the forces which, under their skillful commander, had been successful in brilliantly and easily

reducing the savage potentate to submission. He complimented the marines who were commanded by Colonel Festing, and the sailors under Captain Fremantle, for the energy and gallantry they had displayed; and he warmly eulogized the conduct of Sir Garnet Wolseley, and of the officers under his command, in marching through the brush with a handful of troops, and aiming so decisive a blow at the prestige of the Ashantee monarch as the reduction of Coomassie. "I am mistaken," he said, "if these are not feats of arms which will not be easily forgotten in this country. I know it has always been a vulgar error to associate military glory only with armies of great magnitude. But that is not a just view to take. Some of the greatest military feats have been performed by very small armies. In modern history nothing perhaps is more illustrative of this truth than the conquest of Mexico by Cortes. So great a result effected by such slight means is not easily matched in the history of man. Even in our own times—in that great Continental war which occupied a great part of the early portion of this century—when hosts, counted not only by hundreds of thousands but by millions, were arrayed against each other—it was a small army, admirably disciplined, which, to use the word of their illustrious commander, would go anywhere—it was a small army like that, under our matchless Wellington, which really decided the fate of Europe. I am not wishing to exaggerate the gallant deeds, of which we are naturally proud, of Sir Garnet Wolseley and his brave companions. I do not mean to say that the engagements in which they took part are to be counted among the decisive battles of the world; but I think we may say of them truly that they are those deeds which thrill the hearts of households, and which, by the examples they offer of energy and endurance, sustain and strengthen the tone of a nation." The motion was then agreed to without one dissentient vote.

In his address to his constituents Mr.

Disraeli had given it as his opinion that there was no necessity for any further measure of parliamentary reform, and shortly after having been summoned to power he was called upon to express a similar opinion to the House itself. The question of assimilating the franchise in counties with that of the towns had again been brought forward by Mr. Trevelyan, who had made that subject as much his hobby as was the burials bill with Mr. Osborne Morgan, or the temperance question with Sir Wilfrid Lawson. Mr. Trevelyan introduced his bill in a speech of marked ability. He complained that since the last measure of reform had become law, a great section of the population of the country stood, as compared to the rest of the nation, in a position of political inferiority which was in theory unjust, and in practice was full of disadvantages of the gravest nature to the excluded portion of the community. Without identity of suffrage, he asserted, the country would always have dissatisfied classes, as no measure which did not assimilate the county and borough franchise would stop the agitation for further extension. He denied that it was a sufficient argument for indefinitely deferring so great and necessary a measure of reform by contending that it might have to be accompanied by a rearrangement of representation, which, when carried into effect with the moderation and the caution that marked all political changes in the country, would be in itself absolutely desirable. Why should the hedger, the shepherd, and the ploughman, he asked, be treated as the political inferior of the workman in the towns? These persons belonged to a temperate, patient, and considerate class, loyal to order and to religion. Mr. Trevelyan concluded by asserting that the assimilation of the county and borough franchise could not be resisted on any intelligible principle, and that it was the only course to pursue to keep the agricultural labourer out of the hands of the agitator and of the emigration agent.

Among the most strenuous supporters of the bill was Mr. W. E. Forster. Agricultural labour, he said, was a new force which ought to be admitted within the constitution. If they made use of that force it would assist the commonwealth; but if they did not utilize that force, it would be employed against them. The power of parliament would be increased by giving the agricultural labourers votes, whilst that power would be diminished by denying them votes. The agricultural labourer was now alive as to his rights, and claimed the suffrage; he was no longer asleep or deaf and dumb, but he had begun to express his opinions on political affairs, to proclaim his own grievances, and to declare his own wrongs; whilst his leaders were a power in the land. The agricultural labourer was not a serf, and was it for county members to exclude him? Mr. Forster denied the validity of the ordinary objections to the extension of the franchise, and declared that without the admission of the agricultural labourer many of the pressing political questions of the hour could not be settled. "The agricultural labourer," he concluded, "claimed the franchise; and public opinion, which after all was the ruler of the country, was coming every day more and more to the conclusion that it would be only just, and wise, and constitutional, and safe to grant the claim."

Mr. Disraeli followed Mr. Forster, and at some length refuted the scheme of the bill by objecting to the alterations it would effect in the representation of the country. He began (May 13, 1874) by expressing his surprise that, on the question of the conceding of political privileges to classes of their fellow-subjects, the expediency of such a course had been advocated on the plea that such privileges were the rights of man. The right of certain classes to the franchise had been put forward as the basis of their legislation. The distribution of political power in the community was an affair of convention, and not an affair of moral or abstract right, and it was only in

that sense that the House could deal with it. With regard to the classes which the bill sought to invest with the franchise, he had no hesitation in giving his opinion. He had no doubt, continued Mr. Disraeli, that the rated householder in the county was just as competent to exercise the franchise with advantage to the country as the rated householder in the towns. He had not the slightest doubt whatever, that such an individual possessed all those virtues which generally characterized the British people. And he had as little doubt that if the rated householder in the county possessed the franchise, he would exercise it with the same prudence and the same benefit to the community as the rated householder in the town. But the House must remember, he warned them, that the classes who would receive the franchise if that bill were passed, were not made up of the simple materials which some of the speakers in that debate had chosen to assume.

"The right honourable gentleman," said Mr. Disraeli, "who has just addressed us with so much passionate fervour [Mr. W. E. Forster] said we were bound to admit the agricultural labourer to the franchise—a matter, according to the right honourable gentleman, of vital importance. Unless we admit the agricultural labourer to the franchise, he asks, how are we to legislate upon that important question, the relations between master and servant, which he says is a most pressing question, and must occupy our attention next session? Then, he asks, without admitting the agricultural labourer to the franchise, how are we to deal with the liquor laws? And, said the right honourable gentleman, looking forward with severe scrutiny, unless you enfranchise the agricultural labourer, how are we to deal with the laws affecting the tenure of land? What inference, sir, am I to draw from these important observations coming from so important a quarter? Why, that an immediate dissolution is contemplated. If the agricultural labourers are to send members

to the House of Commons to influence our decisions on those questions, it must be plain that the right honourable gentleman and his friends have been trained so to manœuvre their forces as to bring about an immediate dissolution, by which we can alone obtain the verdict from the new constituencies. Now, sir, the classes who would be enfranchised by the bill of the honourable gentleman [Mr. Trevelyan] are really of a very various character. I speak with some confidence as to the facts, because it has been my duty to examine very much into these details, and I have very little hesitation in saying that if the bill were passed the majority of those it would admit would *not be of the labouring classes*. The honourable gentleman will be surprised to hear that, as I shall show, the *number of the agricultural classes would not by any means amount to a moiety of those who would be admitted*. It is just as well that we should have clear and accurate ideas on this question.

"Now, a word as to the agricultural labourers. It is said—although honourable members opposite appear to have arrived somewhat rapidly at a conclusion on a matter as to which it is difficult to form an accurate opinion—that the agricultural labourers demand the franchise. Well, the agricultural labourer throughout Great Britain is certainly not an identic animal. He differs in every county, and he differs in the same county very materially. The condition of those who are labouring on the land in the northern parts of England is one of great comfort, and I may say of great prosperity. The condition of the agricultural labourer in some of the southern parts is certainly very different. It forms a painful contrast; but that condition, I am bound to say, has greatly improved since the time when the agricultural community expressed their opinion—although the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford [Mr. W. E. Forster] says they have now done so for the first time—I mean the time of the Swing riots, forty years

ago, just on the eve of great political changes in the country. The agricultural labourer, if you contrast his condition in 1830 or 1832 with the present time, even in the worst parts of the southern counties of England, has immensely improved. The average increase during the last forty years in the rate of wages, even in the most—having been criticised for my epithets, I will not say ‘degraded’ part of the country population, but where they enjoy less the comforts of life, has certainly been 15 per cent.: some say more; their toil has been greatly diminished by the introduction of machinery; and we cannot deny that—although there is room for improvement which I hope will be accomplished—their abodes are infinitely better. Well, sir, I am glad to hear the agricultural labourer spoken of now with such respect by honourable gentlemen opposite. I remember the time when the tone was different. The right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford has in the handsomest manner confessed that the agricultural labourer is not a serf; but I remember that until very recently we were always told that he was, and it is to me a subject of considerable satisfaction to hear his virtues at last acknowledged by honourable gentlemen opposite. But in making these observations it does not at all follow that because there is a movement in that class at present—a movement which I for one look upon with no distrust and no fear, and which I believe will ultimately, and I hope will speedily, end in a change in their condition very advantageous to the country—it does not, I say, at all follow that we should immediately, without thought, without the slightest reference to many weighty considerations which I will endeavour briefly to lay before the House—that we should, above all, in a moment of excitement—whatever may be the cause, however just it may be, when there exist a variety of circumstances, hopeful, I trust, for their eventual benefit, but not conducive to calm reflection and judgment—I do not think there is any case for suddenly

advancing them to and investing them with the franchise.

“Sir, there is one excellent feature in this movement among the peasantry of England, and it is this: the stir that is being made among them—I am throwing aside particular instances of exaggeration and artificial agitation which, I think, may be traced to speculative individuals, who will always have a hand in anything like a popular movement—but, generally speaking, the stir in the agricultural community does not, in this instance, arise from any sense of oppression. It is not sense of oppression which has made them discontented with their lot; on the contrary, although they may not, taking them altogether, have risen as rapidly as the other working classes, but perhaps more regularly, still their condition has always been one of progressive improvement. But they feel that they live in a time when great advances are made in all classes, and they are not satisfied that they have advanced sufficiently. But you never find, generally speaking, that they impute their condition to any oppression on the part of their employers. This is apparent from the absence of any acts of violence: they are ready to argue their case. They argue it often with great fallacy, and they often decide upon a course which will end in their disappointment. But as far as the great body of the labouring population is concerned, they are as little influenced by embittered feelings as probably has ever been known in a great popular movement.

“Now, sir, my great objection to the bill of the hon. gentleman is this: that there is no case in which large classes of our fellow-subjects have been invested with the franchise without a *general distribution of power in consequence being considered*. That is a point which has been most entirely evaded throughout this debate, and has only been noticed by the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford to show that he was aware of the difficulty. The right hon. gentleman with great skill,

having announced to the House that he knew of the rock ahead, said there was nothing in it, and avoided it altogether. In fact, the only illustration upon which the right hon. gentleman founded his belief that there was nothing in the objection, that you cannot invest large bodies of the people of this country with electoral privileges without considering and reviewing the redistribution of political power, was a quotation from his own poll-book, in which he informed us that 3000 original electors had been turned by me into 20,000, and that I had not added members to Bradford. Now, let us look at the case in a little more business-like manner. I may remind hon. members that in the year 1866 the House came to a most deliberate—I may say, to a most solemn—decision, in one of the fullest Houses I recollect, that any enfranchisement of large classes of the country must be accompanied by a redistribution of seats. That decision was come to in an important division, for it virtually changed the government. Well, in 1867 the then government brought forward a reform bill which greatly increased the numbers of the constituency. Did they attempt to do that without revising and considering the subject of that redistribution of political power? There were at that time forty-five seats at the disposal of the government, obtained by the disfranchisement of small boroughs—the total disfranchisement of some, and the partial disfranchisement of the rest. Of the forty-five seats, twenty-five were allotted to the counties and the rest to boroughs, including one to a university. Therefore, the right hon. gentleman will see that we acted entirely in unison with the principle laid down in the resolution; and we did it in this way because it was argued that a man who had a vote as a rated householder in Bradford, if he passed the boundary of his borough, might meet another rated householder who had no vote; and that was an anomaly. We found that unless we revised and redistributed the parliamentary seats, all those anomalies would be greatly aggra-

vated, by adding great numbers to the constituencies.

“Let me mention to the House the addition to be made to the number of electors in England and Wales. I have no *data* before me for a similar calculation for Scotland and Ireland, though I have details on other points. The boroughs for England and Wales contain 1,800,000 inhabited houses, providing for the register 1,250,000 voters: that is, the voters are to houses as twenty-five to thirty-six. The counties contain 2,500,000 houses, providing at present 720,000 voters, after deducting 80,000 for qualifications within the boroughs. Assuming that the county householders would come upon the register in the same ratio as borough householders now come, the county voters, under the bill of the hon. gentleman, would number 1,740,000, while the borough voters would remain at the number 1,250,000: that is to say, household suffrage would add 1,000,000 to county voters, and cause county voters to exceed borough voters by 500,000. And now, as the result, 1,740,000 county voters would return 187 members to parliament, while 1,250,000 borough voters would return 297 members. Is it possible, as the right hon. gentleman says, ‘to be deaf and blind’ to facts and circumstances like these? Is it possible for any man with the responsibility, I will not say of a minister, but of a member of parliament, to propose to legislate in that harum-scarum way, on the ground that they are anomalies, because a rated householder out of Bradford has not a vote, and a rated householder in Bradford has a vote? And is he to remedy that anomaly by producing the exaggerated and aggravated national anomaly which I have pointed out? I do not mean to say there is no remedy except by resorting to absolutely equal electoral districts. I do not want to put the case on that extreme position. *Est modus in rebus*, and we must remember that in all these questions great difficulties can be avoided by an assembly which has such past experi-

ence of practical politics as the House of Commons.

"But no one can deny that the consequence of adopting the recommendation of the hon. member for the Border burghs [Mr. Trevelyan], and enfranchising these classes, is that practically we must look also to the redistribution of seats at the same time. No one can deny that in so doing we must move in the direction of electoral districts. Why, all our late legislation for the last forty years, with respect to parliamentary reform and the distribution of seats, has been leading to electoral districts; and though I for one should think it a great misfortune if we entirely destroyed all local influences and distinctions; though I believe, if we did, we should very much weaken the spirit and character of the country; and though I hold that we ought to cling as much as possible to maintaining those local influences and distinctions—*still it is impossible not to see that if you do reconsider and redistribute political power in deference to these views, you must to a great extent be approaching electoral districts.* I will take the whole population of the United Kingdom at 31,450,000. Now, divide that into equal electoral districts; it may never be divided into equal electoral districts, but we must recollect that there is a constant tendency to that. *You would have one representative for each 48,000 of your population.* What would be the effect of that upon particular constituencies? If the country were divided into equal, or anything approaching equal electoral districts, the result would be this: in England and Wales 147 boroughs out of a total of 198 would lose their right to special representation, as containing fewer than 48,000 inhabitants. Among them would be Carlisle, I am sorry to say Gloucester, the city of Oxford, Cambridge, Chester, Tynemouth, Coventry, Chatham, Exeter, and Northampton. In addition to the above 147 borough constituencies, four counties in England and Wales would cease to be specially represented. In Scotland, out

of a total of 22 boroughs, 13 would lose special representation, including Perth and Stirling; while in Ireland, out of a total of 31 boroughs, 27 would be disfranchised, including Derry and Waterford. Now, we are approaching the possibility of such consequences as these arising from our dealing with the numbers in constituencies, and I think it is well for hon. gentlemen to pause and reflect a little on the possible results of such a proposal. *These results, as I have shown, would be that 147 boroughs in England and Wales, 13 in Scotland, and 27 in Ireland—that is, 187 constituencies in the United Kingdom, out of a total of 420—would be disfranchised.* If you go to that excess, you must see that, in making a movement of this kind without considering those collateral conditions and arrangements which are inseparably connected with it, you are striking a blow, and a fatal blow, at the borough constitution of the United Kingdom."

He was not prepared, continued Mr. Disraeli, to take that step. He believed their system of borough representation was one which, on the whole, had been very favourable to the enlightenment and the liberties of England and of the kingdom generally, and he could not say that he thought that was a policy which could in any way be encouraged. He never had been an upholder of small or close boroughs; and as to those young gentlemen who wished for introduction into public life, there were many ways in which they could be introduced without being coddled and nursed in hot-houses of that kind. At the same time, remarked Mr. Disraeli, he would be very sorry to see the class of boroughs with 20,000 or 25,000 of population all erased from the parliamentary map. Still they must prepare themselves for that, if they were about to effect such immense changes in the representation of the country as would produce that consequence—that nearly 2,000,000 of voters would be represented by 187 members, and only 1,250,000 by nearly 300 members. It was

quite clear that the moment they had passed an enfranchisement of that kind, they must be prepared to have their time entirely occupied in efforts to reassert the balance of the constitution and obtain some tolerable representation of the people of England, which they should otherwise have completely destroyed. There was no doubt that through that variety of representation, which was so much admired and appreciated, the boroughs of England had greatly benefited.

"Sir, these are the main reasons," concluded the prime minister, "why I am entirely opposed to the motion of the hon. member for the Border burghs. I agree with several hon. gentlemen who have spoken in this debate, in thinking that it is an unwise thing for a state always to be speculating on organic change, especially in a country like this, an old country, a country influenced greatly by tradition, a country which respects authority from habit, a country which expects in the distribution of political power that it should be invested as much as possible with a venerable character. Nor can I shut my eyes to the fact, that in this matter of organic change, and in the redistribution of political power, our course of late years has been very rapid and decisive. I look forward to the consequences of those measures—whether they be those for which I and my colleagues were responsible, or those for which right hon. gentlemen opposite were responsible—with little alarm, with unshaken confidence in the good sense of the people of England. *But we must remember that they have had a great meal to digest, and I am not quite sure that they have yet entirely assimilated the nutrition which has been profusely supplied to them.* We should not now, in a most unnecessary manner, disturb the political conscience of the country when, as I think, the public mind is not intent upon change, and when the very class on whose position the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford has most rested his argument and his appeal—namely,

agricultural labourers—are only a portion, and not the largest portion, of those interested in this question. The mind of that class is occupied, not with political change, but rather with the elevation of their social condition; and when the disposition of the country is favourable, beyond any preceding time that I can recall, to a successful consideration of the social wants of the great body of the people, I think it would be most unwise to encourage this fever for organic change, and that it would be most expedient for the House of Commons by their vote to-day to give a decided negative to the motion of the hon. gentleman."

On a division the scheme of Mr. Trevelyan was rejected by a majority of 114.

The exchange from leader of the House to leader of the Opposition had been so repugnant to Mr. Gladstone that he had resolved to withdraw himself from public life. "For a variety of reasons," he wrote to Lord Granville, "personal to myself, I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present session. I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable in the view of the party generally for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly

adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all that desire which I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party; and if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or to make provision *ad interim* with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person designated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to render."

This ignoble desertion of his party in the hour of defeat, so characteristic of the man who, whenever his presence at a moment of great responsibility is particularly required, contrives to be absent or to intrust an unpleasant duty to others, was much commented upon. It was impossible not to institute a comparison between Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone. The one so patient, vigilant, and cheerful in Opposition, ever encouraging the despondency of his followers by conjuring up dreams of a brighter future, and never permitting his energies to flag or his splendid courage to falter; the other selfish and splenetic at his change of fortune, eager to sneak off into retirement, and to leave his supporters to their fate and to the jealousies and divisions which he alone could cement and control. Both men were much of the same age, both had passed through the same amount of parliamentary toil, and if rest had been necessary to the one it had also been necessary to the other. In the face of subsequent events it is absurd to assert that the man who, whenever any particular subject excited him, came out of his retirement to make long passionate speeches, who easily endured what younger men would have avoided when stumping the country to void his venom upon the "unspeakable Turk," and the verbosity of whose harangues in Midlothian were only equalled by the energy with which they were delivered—it is absurd to hint that such a man was in need of repose and was worn out. It is not every one, however, who knows how to bear himself in the hour of defeat; the brave and

the strong hope on and endure, the weak and the craven lose heart and find refuge in a selfish retirement. During the earlier part of the session Mr. Gladstone was seldom to be found in his place, but resigned what duties a divided Opposition had to undertake to such lieutenants as Lord Hartington, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Goschen.

Upon the debate on the Scotch Church patronage bill, however, the nominal leader of the Opposition issued from his seclusion. If ever proof was wanted of his being in full physical and intellectual vigour it was offered on that occasion. The object of this bill was to abolish the system of lay patronage in the Established Kirk, and make it over to the congregation. During the last 300 years there had been a warm agitation among the inhabitants north of the Tweed to be intrusted with the right of selecting their own ministers. The Scotch, as history teaches us, had always shown themselves intolerant of any religious interference or control; they desired that all patronage in the church should be transferred from the individual to the congregation. The communicants and the congregation, it was asserted, were the best judges of what kind of presbyter would suit their religious wants; and if they had the power on all occasions of choosing their own clergy there would be an end, at once and for ever, of those feuds and heart-burnings which had arisen when the lay patron had appointed a minister not approved of by his flock. This craving for independence was of long date. So early as 1560 the "First Book of Discipline" had laid down the principle on which the appointment of ministers should proceed. "This liberty," it said, "with all care, must be reserved to every several church, to have their votes and suffrages in the election of their ministers." A few years later the "Second Book of Discipline," which, like its predecessor, had received the approval of the General Assembly, also protested against the system of lay patronage. The suggestions were, however, unavailing; for in the Act passed

towards the close of the sixteenth century, giving the sanction of the civil power to the Presbyterian form of church government, it was provided that the presbytery "be bound and astricted to receive and admit quhatsumever qualified minister presented be his majestie or uther laie patrones."

Such was the state of the law until the rise of the Commonwealth, when patronage was abolished, and the right of election vested in the people and the presbytery. At the Restoration the system of patronage was again introduced, but thirty years later was again abolished. Then came the Union of Scotland with England. Before that fusion took place an Act of Security had been passed in the Scottish parliament, declaring that the Presbyterian form of church government, as then established by law, was to continue. That act was ratified at the time of the Union; but in spite of this ratification, five years after the two countries had been united an Act was hastily passed through parliament enforcing lay patronage—which had been abolished in 1690—upon the whole of the people of Scotland. In spite of individual protests and the constant opposition of General Assemblies, that law continued to remain in force. The General Assembly had endeavoured to soften its provisions by proposing the Veto Act, which declared that the dissent of the majority of the male heads of families in a parish, being communicants, should be sufficient to set aside a presentee. Disputes, however, constantly arose between the patron and the congregations as to the legality of the veto—the patron asserting that it was not an Act of Parliament, but only an Act of the General Assembly, and therefore not possessing the force of law; whilst the congregations contended that, in the opinion of the law officers of Scotland, the church had full power to pass such an Act, and to see that its clauses were duly carried out. At last these contests resulted in the secession of 1843—the most splendid instance of dis-

interestedness which history, either secular or ecclesiastical, affords. In the same year which saw that memorable scene of disruption was passed the Act of Lord Aberdeen, permitting ministers on their presentation to a congregation to undergo, if necessary, a rigid examination in open court as to the religious opinions they held, and the ability they possessed to promulgate them.

Such briefly was the state of the Kirk when the Duke of Richmond rose before his peers to introduce, on the part of the government, the church patronage bill. After stating the reasons which had led ministers to interfere in the matter, he propounded his scheme. The Act of Lord Aberdeen, which inflicted such torture upon a nominee, was to be repealed; church patronage was to be vested in the communicants of the parishes under regulations which were to be framed from time to time by the General Assembly; and with regard to compensation, patrons were to be entitled to compensation to an amount not exceeding one year's stipend, for the rights of which they were to be deprived.

The bill received the unanimous approval of the Peers, and it was hoped that a satisfactory solution of a long-vexed question had been at last arrived at. The introducer of the measure was most careful to anticipate and answer the chief probable objection to the scheme—that it might serve as a precedent to deal with the system of church patronage in England. There was not the slightest similitude, said the Duke of Richmond, in the position of the law of patronage in the two countries. They must look at the question from a Scottish, and not from an English point of view; they must regard it from the principles of the Act of Union, and try and settle the matter upon Presbyterian principles as based upon the Act of 1690, upon the Act of Union, and upon subsequent statutes. In Scotland the price of a next presentation was estimated at one year's purchase, whilst in England it was estimated at sixteen years' purchase. In

England church government harmonized with the system of church patronage, but in Scotland it had no sympathy with the Presbyterian form of worship, or with the Presbyterian form of church government. "In the one case," said the Duke of Richmond, "we have a liturgy; in the other there is no liturgy at all. Therefore, in the case of an English Church, you may appoint a clergyman who may perform his duties admirably with respect to the liturgy, but that is not in the least degree dependent upon the eloquence and talents of the minister who conducts the service; whereas, in the Scotch Church, you must depend on his talents and eloquence. Therefore, my lords, you cannot draw any analogy whatever from the mode of conducting the service in the two countries; and I say that the patronage with respect to England and the patronage with respect to Scotland in church matters are entirely different."

The passage of the bill through the Upper House was rapid, and it was only when brought forward in the Commons that it had to encounter opposition. In the interest of the Nonconformists, Mr. Baxter at once rose to move an amendment against the principle of the measure, declaring it inexpedient to legislate without further inquiry and information. He asserted that neither the government nor the House of Commons had sufficient information as to the ecclesiastical position and the feelings of the people of Scotland to be able to legislate satisfactorily, and suggested that a royal commission or select committee should be appointed to obtain the necessary information. Mr. Baxter then sat down, and was replied to by various members of the House; nor was it expected that the debate would be enlivened by any unusual display of eloquence. But the prospect of joining in a theological strife was too strong for Mr. Gladstone to resist. He had entered the house unheeded, and when he stood up at the table to address the chamber it was some little time before members could

accustom themselves to the sight of his unfamiliar presence. The first shock over, the ex-leader of the Liberal party was greeted with such a ringing cheer of welcome from his followers as to prevent him speaking for a few moments. It was like a favourite actor who has taken a farewell of the stage again appearing on the boards.

Mr. Gladstone vehemently objected to the bill. It was dangerous and unfair. He disapproved of the exclusive character of the congregation which was to select ministers; he was opposed to the compensation clauses; and he considered that the abolition of patronage would work injustice to the Free Church. "What are you going to do," he asked, "for those people whom you drove out of the Established Church and compelled to find ministers for themselves, to build churches, mansees, and schools, and, in fact, to organize and pay for the establishment of a complete system of church government? You compelled them to do all this, and now you say, 'We are going to adopt the same principles for which you contended;' but you do not offer to take those people back. If you did, I should entirely approve of this bill." The measure, if it became law, continued Mr. Gladstone, would further the cause of disestablishment. He was no idolater of disestablishment, though he had never regretted the course he had pursued with regard to the Irish Church—indeed, he was perfectly willing that his character should be tried simply and solely by the proceedings to which he was a party on that occasion. In Scotland there had been no general movement of principle towards disestablishment, and it was unwise to suggest it, as the bill before the House undoubtedly did, by declining to recognize the existence of those great Presbyterian communities which had been driven out of the church and had been compelled to become Dissenters. "I think it unwise," concluded Mr. Gladstone, "to provoke this war, unwise to throw nearly a moiety of the population of Scotland into the ranks of disestablishment,

and thus excite a fierce and probably a prolonged and bitter controversy. I must, while admitting a hostility to the principle of patronage to lie at the root of Scottish Presbyterianism, support the amendment of my right hon. friend, which I interpret as meaning that other steps ought to be taken, steps of justice, of propriety, of prudence—I might even say of decency—towards the non-established bodies, before we proceed to constitute the singular and unexampled condition of privilege which is the immediate object of this measure."

Mr. Disraeli replied. He began by a graceful allusion to the welcome reappearance of the leader of the Opposition. "This bill," he said (July 6, 1874), "which in another house of parliament was supported and blessed by more than one colleague of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, has, I am sorry to say, been banned by that right hon. gentleman in this House. If that were the only consideration for his reappearance among us, I would endure it, though with regret, because I must express the general feeling of the House that we have all missed him, and I not the least. I have found the conduct of debate much more difficult in his absence, and as there appears to be for the remainder of the session some preponderance of these peculiar subjects in which he is so remarkably interested, I trust his appearance to-night will not be a solitary one." Having delivered himself of these prefatory remarks, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to discuss the nature of the bill.

He pointed out the distinction between Scottish and English ecclesiastical patronage. "The great difference between them is," he said, "that the Scotch patron does not in fact patronize, and that Scotch patronage does not exact anything from the patron. It is not patronage in the English sense. That is about an accurate summary of his peculiar position, although we are obliged to use the word patronage, because it is a word commonly accepted when we speak on the subject, and a word

which enables us to understand what we are talking about. Therefore, the fact is that the bill is not about patronage at all in the English sense, but refers to a question whether there should or should not be a new rule for selecting ministers in Scotland, and whether the selection should be made by every portion and class of the congregation agreeing in the change which is proposed." Then in answer to those who asserted that the bill was a revolutionary measure, divorcing the church first from the crown and then from the land, Mr. Disraeli carefully explained that the queen was not the head of the Scottish Kirk. "Her Majesty's connection with the Scottish Kirk," he said, "though a gracious and generous one, is not one similar to that which exists in England; and I believe that connection will continue represented, as Her Majesty will be, by her lord high commissioner on that interesting occasion which is allowed to the Established Church of Scotland to express their unanimous approval of the proposition of Her Majesty's ministers. Again, I want to know how the fact of a patron by law renouncing the exercise of an act of patronage which he had never exercised can terminate the connection of the kirk with the land. It terminates the connection of the kirk with an individual who is called a patron, but the connection of the Kirk of Scotland with the land is exactly the same. How inconsistent, then, it is to say the Kirk of Scotland is to continue to enjoy her endowments, and at the same time, by this revolutionary Act, we are divorcing her from the land she has been so long connected with, and from which her income is produced."

Mr. Disraeli next disputed the objections that had been raised to ministers being selected by the congregations. Selection, he contended, was the peculiar privilege of the congregations, and was a right which should not be intrusted to those outside the congregations. The idea of placing that power in the hands of the ratepayers, as had been

suggested, would be intolerable in Scotland, and would receive no sanction from any church, school, or body of men. To whom, he asked, should they intrust it but to communicants and the members of the congregation? What more reasonable plan could be proposed? He then defended the amount of compensation to be paid to patrons under the bill, and pointed out that to substitute the civil courts for the ecclesiastical courts, as had been recommended, would be fatal to the olive branch being held out to the United Presbyterians and the Free Church. Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—

"The right hon. gentleman [Mr. Gladstone] says that the Established Church drove out the Free Church. That, however, is not my view of the great Scotch religious movement. I think the Free Church resigned. They were not driven out, and that places the Established Church in a very different position from what it would have occupied if it had driven the Free Church out. The right hon. gentleman opposite might as well say that we drove him out of office. I say we did not drive him out of office. He resigned office; and having resigned, I say we are not at all bound to invite him to return. But if we drove him out, and a touch of remorse influenced us, we might then have been morally bound to do so. There is that distinction also between the Established Church and the Free Church. It never entered into their heads to drive the Free Church out. That was a most voluntary and unexpected act. It might seem an unreasonable one, but that it was an heroic one we all agree. The right hon. gentleman the member for Montrose [Mr. Baxter], who has moved one of the oddest amendments ever moved in this House, must allow me to make one remark. He says he requires more time. We bring forward a bill the principle of which he is opposed to; but he says, 'It is too late,' and therefore let it be a little later. This is the result of the whole proposition of the right hon. gentleman:—'What you are doing may be admir-

able, but I oppose it because it is too late; therefore put it off for another year and we will consider it.' I do not think that the right hon. gentleman will induce the House to adopt that amendment. The right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich has told us, that if there is one thing that he is prouder of than another it is that of abolishing the Irish Church; that he is more proud of abolishing the Irish Church than of any other deed in his illustrious career. He says that he would desire nothing more than that upon his tombstone should be inscribed the destruction of the Irish Church. (*Cries of "No, no!"*) If I have stated anything that is unfair I will recall it; but I thought I heard the right hon. gentleman say that he should wish that to be upon his tombstone, or that there should be some memorial of that sort. I would say myself that in the anthology of memorable epitaphs I doubt whether that will be handed down to posterity. One thing, at all events, I hope—that upon that tombstone we shall not see inscribed the destruction of another church."

The amendment of Mr. Baxter was negatived by a large majority. The church patronage bill was then carried through parliament, and received the royal assent August 7, 1874.

At the same time another ecclesiastical measure was being discussed which attracted far more attention, and was the subject of far keener opposition, than the scheme for the abolition of patronage north of the Tweed. The disturbance and disobedience caused by the rapid development of Ritualism throughout the country had attained to such a pernicious height, that it became absolutely necessary to appeal to parliament to furnish extra powers to check and suppress the innovation. The band of disloyal clergy whose aim it was to Italianize the Church of England declined, either by the remonstrances of their bishops or the admonitions of their judges, to be turned from their purpose. The teaching of the Reformation was openly reviled, and the

Protestant character of the Church of England flatly denied. In every town throughout the kingdom, and in many of our villages, there was a church where the communion table was converted into an "altar," where the doctrine of the mass was frankly proclaimed, where the system of the confessional was unblushingly practised, where strange vestments were worn by the clergy, where incense rendered the atmosphere thick and oppressive, where banners emblazoned with the sickly anatomy of Romish idolatry stood against the walls, and where little books of devotion, calmly plagiarized from similar works by Popish divines, were circulated among and studied by the congregation. The vain pastor of this bastard flock, often the veriest mediocrity, who had barely escaped rejection in the schools of his university, mimicked the authority of Rome without having subjected himself in the least to her severe discipline or unselfish obedience. He posed as a "priest" with power to bind and loose, and claimed to be styled "father," yet the only law he obeyed was that of his own interpretation, and any mandate which did not please the warped and cloudy guide he called his conscience he irritatingly ignored. If remonstrated with he calmly referred his bishop, to whom he had solemnly sworn an unconditional obedience, to a solicitor, or treated his lordship as one who was himself in want of being enlightened as to the means of grace.*

The consequences of these innovations, and of this revolt against authority, were in those districts where the congrega-

tion was opposed to Ritualism to swell the ranks of dissent, and to impoverish the diocesan by incessant litigation. Without the aid of additional powers being conferred upon him, the bishop was powerless to make his authority felt; the refractory "priest," amply supplied with funds by a schismatic society, could appeal from court to court and fairly exhaust the resources of his pursuer. To deal with such scheming gentry, the only course to adopt was to apply for the treatment imposed by law upon mischievous citizens.† The clergyman of the Church of England who set his bishop at defiance, who withdrew his adherence from the Thirty-nine Articles, and who availed himself of his position to promulgate the teaching of an erroneous opponent, was as fully deserving of punishment as the naval or military officer who disobeyed his commander, rejected the articles of war, and employed his rank and uniform to enter into secret machinations with the enemy. Both were traitors in the camp, and merited the condemnation meted out to treachery.

To put a stop to these ignoble, yet most dangerous tricks, the Episcopal body drew up a measure which was to bring the vagaries of such clergy more under the control of their congregations, and at the same time to give the supervisors of the church increased power of checking practices deemed inconsistent with the character of the Anglican communion. The task of introducing the new bill into the House of Lords devolved upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, and most ably his grace acquitted himself of the duty intrusted to him. He alluded to the many painful cases of insubordination which rendered it necessary to bring forward "an act for the better administration of the laws respecting the regulation of public worship." The act did not propose to change the laws ecclesiastical, but only to furnish the bench of

* "We are told that we should govern the church by fatherliness. Now I must be allowed to say that there is something very one-sided in this cry for fatherliness from the bishops when they meet with no filialness, and I should like to have some reciprocity. When a monition is to be flung back in my face, and I am told that I am 'neither a gentleman nor a divine,' and that my conversion to Christianity is to be prayed for, I must say I should like to see a little filialness on the part of those who are demanding this fatherliness. I honestly desire, as far as I can, to be fatherly towards these men; but when I hear this advice given to us I am reminded of the solitary instance in which a ruler attempted to govern in this fatherly fashion, and that his name was Eli, while his sons were Hophni and Phinehas."—*Bishop of Peterborough, House of Lords, May 11, 1874.*

† "I confess I have no sympathy with men who thus pose as martyrs, when they are really only playing the part of anarchists and bad citizens."—*Charge of the Bishop of Manchester, 1880.*

bishops with greater facilities in the administration of those laws. It was impossible, said his grace, that the state of things at present existing in the Church of England could be permitted to continue. There must be an end of the substitution of a spurious Romanism for the doctrines of the Church of England. The law of the Church of England was clear and distinct. Every clergyman at the time of his ordination declared that he would listen to the admonitions of those who might be set over him; and when he was licensed to any curacy or to any place of preferment, he again made a declaration of obedience to the ordinary in all things lawful and honest. It was laid down in the Canons that if there were any doubt about the dress of the clergyman, the matter was to be referred to the ordinary, and he was to decide it. If a question arose as to the meaning of any passage in the Book of Common Prayer, the parties were to come before the bishop; and if not satisfied with his decision, before the archbishop. Again, it was provided that nothing should be put up in any church without a faculty out of the bishop's court. All those provisions showed what the intention of the church was.

"Certainly," said the archbishop, "it is not her intention that any young and inexperienced man, fresh from college, who goes to a parish, should upset everything that has been going on there satisfactorily for perhaps fifty years before; but it is her intention that if he wishes to introduce changes which in his opinion will make the celebration of divine worship approximate more nearly to be what it ought to be, he should apply to the ordinary." To prevent those abuses the bill proposed to give to the bishops that directory power as to worship which from various places in the Canons and the Prayer Book seemed to have been intended in the constitution of the church. The bishop was to be guided by the advice of a board of assessors, clerical and lay. Should any parishioner or the rural dean

or the archdeacon, consider that the practices of a given incumbent with regard to public worship amounted to a grievance, he had full power to lay his complaint before the bishop; and if the bishop should think it was a matter that ought to be inquired into, he was to call his assessors together; and if that tribunal should condemn the act or acts in question, the bishop was to issue his monition. An appeal was, however, to be allowed to the archbishop, with a board of assessors, whose decision was to be final.

"My lords," said the Archbishop of Canterbury in conclusion, "it has been said that we were coming to your Lordships' House to propose what would be a revolution in the Church of England. If it be a revolution to say that the law ought to be obeyed—if it be a revolution to enable parishioners to obtain their just rights without squandering their money in needless costs—if it be a revolution to quietly and speedily put a stop to the heart-burnings now complained of—then we must plead guilty to our plan being one of revolution. The revolution we propose to bring about is one of those peaceable revolutions for which England is famous among nations—revolutions which have quietly removed proved abuses, and have saved many a venerable institution which would otherwise have been destroyed, not from any evil inherent in its nature, but from abuses which have gathered round it through its very antiquity."

The bill, though it was afterwards supported by Mr. Disraeli, was not a government measure, and encountered no little opposition in its passage through the Upper House. The bench as well as the cabinet, were divided as to the benefit that would result from the scheme when it became law. The Bishop of Lincoln was in favour of deferring legislation until Convocation had had time to reform the rubrics. Lord Shaftesbury objected to the power to be bestowed by the bill on the bishops; no one, he said, whatever he was, ought to be invested with absolute power. Lord Salisbury feared that the measure would

put in jeopardy that spirit of toleration upon which, as upon a foundation, the stately fabric of the church establishment reposed. Various amendments were proposed in committee and adopted; the most important being the one suggested by Lord Shaftesbury. It was proposed that one ecclesiastical judge should preside in the courts of Canterbury and of York, to be appointed by the two archbishops with the approval of the crown; and that before such judge, and not before the bishop of the diocese, each case of complaint, if not dismissed by the bishop as frivolous, was to go for trial. With this amendment inserted in the bill, and a few minor alterations also effected, the measure passed the Upper House without a division, and was sent down to the Commons for approval.

In the popular chamber it became the subject of a keener and warmer discussion. The most formidable antagonist of the bill was, however, Mr. Gladstone, who again came out of his self-imposed retirement to take a prominent part in the debate. He objected to the measure as unnecessary and intolerant. "I take my stand," he said, "upon the broad ground that a certain degree of liberty has been permitted in the congregations of the Church of England; that great diversity exists in different parts of the country and in different congregations; that various customs have grown up in accordance with the feelings and usages of the people; and whether the practices that have so grown up are or are not in accordance with the law, I say they ought not to be rashly and rudely rooted out." Mr. Gladstone concluded by suggesting six resolutions which he thought might form the basis of legislation so as to control the eccentricities of individuals, without "proscribing all varieties of opinion and usage among the many thousand congregations of the church distributed through the land." The speech was passionate and eloquent, but it failed to make much impression on the House owing to the pronounced Ritualistic tendencies of the speaker. The Lower Chamber as well as

the country was wearied with the fantastic tricks played before high heaven by the ceremonialists, and was determined that the sect should be put down. Sir William Vernon Harcourt stated the case boldly and succinctly, and was loudly cheered by both sides of the House for the open Protestantism of his opinions. What was required by the nation, he said, and what parliament had to do, was to reassert the unalterable attachment of the English people to the principles of the Reformation. It was necessary to show that the national church of England was in reality what it ought to be—the church of a Protestant nation. If the law was defective, if the rubrics were obsolete, then let them be reformed and enforced; but on no account must the dangerous doctrine of "optional conformity" be set up, which would allow any priest to do what he pleased, and set at defiance those principles of the Reformation which for three centuries had been established by the law of England.

Those who have studied the speeches of Mr. Disraeli upon church and state will be perfectly prepared for the course the prime minister adopted on this occasion. He had not spared the Ritualists whenever he had been forced to allude to their obstinate yet underhand proceedings, and on this occasion he was certainly not going to befriend their cause. He, in common with all healthy-minded Englishmen, considered them as a mischievous, illiterate, and effeminate body. In spite of their aggressive activity, and of their love for being always before the public, they had not boasted of a single man within their ranks eminent as a scholar, an orator, or a theologian. They were pre-eminently the "stupid party" in the church—fond, with the fondness of womanly men, of adulation from the inane, of mysterious gestures since their brains were incapable of conceiving ideas, of many-coloured garments, of puerile sentimentalities, and of observances which only excited emotion among the weak and hysterical. Had it not been for their per-

sistent resistance to authority the names of the leaders among the Ritualists would have been utterly unknown; they were men who had mistaken notoriety for fame, obstinacy for firmness, and a childish interest in worthless details for learning. Such was not the school, nor were such the men, that had ever inspired Mr. Disraeli with sympathy. He at once took the Public Worship Regulation Act under his special protection, and through his advocacy it became law.

"What," he asked (July 15, 1874), "is the object of the bill which we are now considering? I will at first say what I consider is not the object of it. It is not the object of the bill to attack any of the legitimate parties in the church. Were it so, I certainly should not have facilitated the discussion of its merits in this House. I look upon the existence of parties in the church as a necessary and beneficial consequence. They have always existed, even from apostolic times; they are a natural development of the religious sentiment in man; and they represent fairly the different conclusions at which, upon subjects that are the most precious to him, the mind of man arrives. Ceremony, enthusiasm, and free speculation are the characteristics of the three great parties in the church, some of which have now modern names, and which the world is too apt to imagine are in their character original. The truth is that they have always existed in different forms or under different titles. Whether they are called High Church or Low Church, or Broad Church, they bear witness in their legitimate bounds to the activity of the religious mind of the nation, and in the course of our history this country is deeply indebted to the exertions and the energy of all three parties. The High Church party, not less impressive in its religious manifestations than a noble page in the history of England, it is has contributed the liberation of the country in a memorable manner, in language it may not deserve the honour which this country has experienced

from the exertions of the evangelical school at the commencement of this century; and in the case of the Broad Church, it is as well that a learned and highly-disciplined section of the clergy should show at the present day that they are not afraid of speculative thought, or are appalled by the discoveries of science. *I hold that all these schools of religious feeling can pursue their instincts consistently with a faithful adherence to the principles and practices of the Reformation as exhibited and represented in its fairest and most complete form—the Church of England.* I must ask myself, What then is the real object of the bill? and I will not attempt to conceal my impressions upon it, for I do not think that our ability to arrive at a wise decision to-day will be at all assisted by a mystical dissertation on the subject-matter of it. I take the primary object of this bill, whose powers, if it be enacted, will be applied and extended impartially to all subjects of Her Majesty, to be this—to *put down Ritualism*. The right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich says he does not know what Ritualism is; but there, I think, the right hon. gentleman is in an isolated position. That ignorance is not shared by the House of Commons or by the country. What the House and the country understand by Ritualism is, *practices by a portion of the clergy avowedly symbolic of doctrines which the same clergy are bound in the most solemn manner to reject and repudiate*. Therefore I think there can be no mistake among practical men as to what is meant when we say that it is our desire to discourage Ritualism."

Mr. Disraeli then defended himself and his party from the same thing at the Conservatives by Mr. Gladstone, that after promising the country tranquillity they were doing their utmost by tampering with clerical topics to excite the nation upon church and religious questions. "As far as I am individually concerned," continued the premier, "I do not think the same was just or deserved. I can say most sincerely that I have never addressed any

body of my countrymen for the last three years without having taken the opportunity of intimating to them that a great change was occurring in the politics of the world; that it would be well for them to prepare for that change; and that it was impossible to conceal from ourselves that the great struggle between the temporal and spiritual power, which had stamped such indelible features upon the history of the past, was reviving in our own time. I never spoke upon these subjects with passion, nor did I seek in any way at any time to excite such feelings in the minds of those I addressed. I spoke upon a matter which it was difficult for the million immediately to apprehend, and therefore it was not a topic introduced in order to create political excitement. I spoke from strong conviction, and from a sense of duty, when I wished to direct the public mind, as far as I could, to the consideration of circumstances in which it was so deeply interested, and which could not fail to influence the history of the country. I said then that it appeared to me to be of the very utmost importance—and I am speaking now of the time when I addressed a large body of my countrymen as lately as autumn last—I said then, as I say now, looking to what is occurring in Europe,* looking at the great struggle between the temporal and spiritual power which has been precipitated by those changes, of which many in this House are so proud, and of which, while they may triumph in their accomplishment, they ought not to shut their eyes to the inevitable consequences—I said then, and say now, that in the disasters, or rather in the disturbance and possible disasters, which must affect Europe, and which must to a certain degree sympathetically affect England, that it would be wise for us to rally on the broad platform of the Reformation. Believing as I do that those principles were never so completely and so powerfully

represented as by the Church of England; believing that without the learning, the authority, the wealth, and the independence of the Church of England, the various sects of the Reformation would by this time have dwindled into nothing—I called the attention of the country, so far as I could, to the importance of rallying around the institution of the Church of England, based upon those principles of the Reformation which that church was called into being to represent.

“I do not, therefore, think that the taunt of the right hon. gentleman is one to which I am liable. But I confess I have looked forward, not without deep regret and apprehension, to the discussions which now occupy us, and which will much more occupy our time in the future, and with that sense of responsibility to which any man whose mind is open to the vast consequences involved cannot be blind. I wish, I may add most sincerely and in the strongest manner, that all should understand that if I make the slightest allusion to the dogmas and ceremonies which are promulgated by the English Ritualists, I am anxious not to make a single observation which could offend the convictions of any hon. gentleman in this House. Whether those doctrines which were quoted from authoritative writings and from books by the hon. member for Berkshire [Mr. Walter]—and which, I am sorry to say, are found on too many of the library shelves and tables of English clergymen†—whether those doctrines are or are not adopted by them—whether they apply to the worship of the Virgin, to the confessional, or to the various subjects which were quoted by the hon. member—*so long as those doctrines are held by Roman Catholics, I am prepared to treat them with reverence*; but what I object to is, that *they should be held by ministers of our church who, when they enter the church,*

* At this time there was a keen conflict in Germany and Austria between ministers holding liberal opinions and the Ultramontanes.

† These books were, “Four Cardinal Virtues,” by the Rev. Orby Shipley; “The Church and the World,” and an essay by Dr. Littledale, advocating stage effects as an aid to public worship. The speech of Mr. Walter will well repay perusal; it was highly praised by Mr. Disraeli.

enter it at the same time with a solemn contract with the nation that they will oppose those doctrines and utterly resist them. What I do object to is Mass in masquerade. To the solemn ceremonies of our Roman Catholic friends I am prepared to extend that reverence which my mind and conscience always give to religious ceremonies sincerely believed in; but the false position in which we have been placed by, I believe, a small but a powerful and well-organized body of those who call themselves English clergymen, in copying those ceremonies, is one which the country thinks intolerable, and of which we ought to rid ourselves. The proposition before us is a moderate and temperate one. No one can deny it is but a measure of procedure; and I am prepared to look upon it as a bill simple in its character, and professing nothing more than that which may be found in its clauses."

Mr. Disraeli concluded by fixing a day for the discussion of the six resolutions brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, and expressed his desire that the question should be settled as soon as possible. "I shrink, I must say," he observed, "from the religious and ecclesiastical agitation which I see before me, and the consequences of our neglecting to fulfil what I think may be considered to be our duty in the present instance—to pass a measure temperate and moderate, I believe, in its scope, as I know it to be so in its conception. Further, if we refuse to pass this bill, which is essentially conciliatory, we may find ourselves called upon to contend with far greater difficulties, and be obliged to apply as a remedy measures of a character far more stringent—measures of a character which one does not wish to associate with the feelings of religion, and with those sentiments which hon. members on both sides of the House equally honour and appreciate—sentiments of good-will towards our neighbours with regard to those religious opinions which they may respect and revere."

The second reading of the bill was pro-

posed and carried without a division. This unusual unanimity on the part of the House of Commons was most significant of the disapproval in which the teaching of the Ritualists was held by the representatives of the country. So decided a consensus of opinion caused Mr. Gladstone to alter his tactics. He withdrew his resolutions, since the House by reading the bill a second time without a division plainly proved that it was anxious to go at once into committee. "I cannot in fairness," said Mr. Gladstone, "do otherwise than accept that decision as an expression of the desire of the House that we should proceed to the consideration of the bill in committee, without raising any of those broad questions relating to the grounds and proper limits of legislation on ecclesiastical subjects which undoubtedly are raised in the resolutions of which I have given notice. Under these circumstances, as my desire is that the provisions of the bill should receive the very best form of which they are capable, I do not intend to move the resolutions." These obstacles removed, the bill was discussed in committee, and matters for a time went smoothly. The chief clauses of the measure were confirmed, and a few important amendments approved of. Then occurred a conflict which appeared to place the bill in great jeopardy. An amendment was proposed, giving the persons making complaint against an officiating clergyman the right of appealing to the archbishop, in case the bishop refused to institute proceedings. This suggestion was adopted by nearly three to one. Mr. Gladstone warmly opposed it, and made a motion to rescind the amendment on the ground that such a right of appeal would be an unprecedented interference with the relations between suffragans and metropolitans. The House, however, refused to support him, and a majority of twenty-three decided against his motion.

On the amendment being sent up for consideration by the Peers, a small majority declined to accept it. The archbishops

were in favour of it, but nine bishops proved themselves hostile. The Bishop of Winchester said he would trample his episcopal robes under foot if he did not believe that Episcopacy was of divine institution; and if it was of divine institution, then each bishop was ruler by divine right in his own diocese. The Bishop of Lincoln opposed the amendment, since it tended to over-ride episcopal discretion, and set up a pope at Canterbury and an anti-pope at York. The lord chancellor, anxious to avoid a collision between the two Houses, proposed a temporizing amendment, which, however, did not meet with much favour. The most bold and out-spoken of the peers was the Marquis of Salisbury, who throughout the proceedings had looked coldly upon the bill, and warmly disapproving of the House of Commons' amendment, was not in the least intimidated at the prospect of a conflict between the two branches of the legislature.

"If the safeguard of the bishop's veto were done away with," he said, "he feared that even although there might be no resistance among the clergy, the life-blood of the church would be drained, because the candidates for holy orders would fall off, not only in numbers but in the quality of the men, inasmuch as every man of independent mind would shrink from exposing himself to the dangers which the bill, if thoroughly carried out, would involve. Much had been said of the majority in 'another place,' and of the peril in which the bill would be if the clause under discussion were rejected. There was a great deal of that kind of bluster when any particular course had been taken by the other House of Parliament. It should be borne in mind that the majority was only twenty-three, and that those who were most interested in supporting the amendment were the very persons who, above all things, desired that the bill should pass. It was absurd, then, to suppose that if the clause were rejected there would not be found twelve men among them with

sufficient common sense to accept the bill without it, rather than lose it altogether. He, for one, therefore utterly repudiated the bugbear of a majority of the House of Commons. It was, he contended, their Lordships' duty to take the course which they deemed right. Upon them rested the responsibility of making a measure which could be worked with safety to the peace, prosperity, and order of the Church of England, or one which would issue in endless calamities and disasters." Acting upon this advice the amendment was rejected by the Peers by a majority of twelve.

The bill was now reconsidered by the Commons. Mr. Russell Gurney, who had introduced the measure into the popular chamber, was of opinion that, rather than imperil the bill by a conflict which there was not time, considering the lateness of the session, to fight out, the verdict of the Upper House should be accepted and the amendment be expunged. Sir William Harcourt entertained the same views; he, however, especially appealed to the prime minister to vindicate the character of the House of Commons against the strictures passed upon it by Lord Salisbury. It was not the province of a private member, he remarked, to vindicate the dignity and independence of that chamber. "We have among us," said he, looking at Mr. Disraeli, "a man to whom the task belongs, and who is adequate to its fulfilment. We have a leader of this House who is proud of the House of Commons, and of whom the House of Commons is proud. Well may the prime minister be proud of the House of Commons, for it was the scene of his early triumphs, and it is still the arena of his later and well-earned glory. Although we differ in political principles, we all recognize that he has ever maintained that dignified decency which contributes so much to the well-regulated conduct of public affairs; and therefore it is that the right hon. gentleman is not more admired for his talents than he is respected for his behaviour in the conduct of the business of this the first

assembly of gentlemen in the world." He therefore called upon Mr. Disraeli to defend the House "against the ill-advised railing of a rash and rancorous tongue, even though it be the tongue of a cabinet minister, a secretary of state, and a colleague." He then criticised the nature of the majority in the Upper House which had rejected the amendment, and entered into a long and learned dissertation upon the nature of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Sir William concluded by imploring Mr. Disraeli to stand fast by the Protestantism of the country, asserting that so long as the premier pursued that policy he would find support in quarters perhaps where he least expected it.

The prime minister then rose to suggest the course to be adopted. "What is this bill, and what does it ask?" he began (August 5, 1874). "I have endeavoured before to describe it as a bill to put down Ritualism, and some have excepted to that description. I am here to repeat it, because I believe it is a true and accurate description of its purpose. We have been asked, 'What is Ritualism?' I think the answer to that question is clear and short. I mean by Ritualism the practice, by a certain portion of the clergy of the Church of England, of ceremonies which they themselves confess are symbolical of doctrine which they are pledged, by every solemn compact which can bind men to their sovereign and their country, to denounce and repudiate. And of all the false pretences of this body of men, there is in my opinion none more glaring and pernicious than their pretending that they are *a portion of the High Church party of the Church of England*. The most eminent vindicators of that Protestantism which they denounce may be found among authors who profess High Church opinions. The most able vindicators of Protestantism, and the most able opponents of the Church of Rome, are to be found among divines of High Church principles. In the most critical period of the Church of England, and I may add

also of our public liberties in general, when the bishops were sent to the Tower, the majority of those bishops were bishops of High Church principles. Well then, I say that this bill, the purpose of which is to put an end to and put down this *small but pernicious sect*, is one which we ought not to forfeit without due and grave consideration. There is also another reason why at this time I am most anxious that the House should not take a false step in this particular. I have hinted it before, but I will now express it with more clearness. My conviction is that, however tranquil may be the general state of Europe—and indeed, with the exception of one unhappy country,* it is a state of general tranquillity—there are agencies at work in it at this moment which are preparing a period of great disturbance. The disturbance may not occur in my time, or while I am standing on this side of the table; but I am glad to know that on both sides of the House there is a rising generation of statesmen who will be competent to cope with it; and I only wish to impress upon their conviction that that great task is one which they cannot avoid, and to which I trust they will be equal."

Since the bill was of such importance continued Mr. Disraeli, he could not counsel any course which might imperil its fate. He fully approved of the amendment; but he must remember that when the bill was sent down from the Peers for the consideration of the Commons, the provision made in that amendment was not contained in it. "Am I prepared," he asked, "to forfeit all that has been accomplished in this bill, in order merely to indulge in what practically would be an empty protest against the conduct of the majority in the other House of Parliament?" The House of Lords, he said, was perfectly within its right to accept or reject the amendment and he could not agree with those who considered the Peers had exceeded their just

* The Carlist war was then being waged in the northern provinces of Spain.

authority. "I am content," he said, proving how sound and well balanced was his Conservatism, "to recognize that a majority of the House of Lords has decided against the opinion of the House of Commons. I regret that decision; but I must respect the independence of the other House, and I cannot for a moment assert or maintain that they have not exercised their rights, privileges, and prerogatives in the course which they have pursued and in the resolution at which they have arrived." The simple question, then, for them to decide was this—Would they accept the views of the Peers and pass the bill, or oppose the majority in the House of Lords and place the bill in danger? He was not in favour of opposition. "I foresee," said Mr. Disraeli, "that if this bill does not pass into law parliament may be involved, and quickly involved, in discussions which may be most inconvenient to the public interests, and which will exercise a very deleterious effect upon the general legislation of the country. There is something in these questions of such commanding, such alarming, and such absorbing interest, that a wise parliament would never enter into them unless there was a deep necessity. They distract the public mind from the consideration of all those measures which are necessary for the advancement of the country and the progress of the population; and if it were only for that consideration, I should hesitate before counselling a step which might lead to such consequences." As it was therefore absolutely necessary that the bill should become law during the session, he advised no hostility to the suggestions moved by the Peers.

Then Mr. Disraeli alluded to the strictures passed upon the House of Commons by Lord Salisbury, and which had so excited the wrath of Sir William Harcourt.

"My noble friend," he said, "who has been referred to in the course of this debate, was long a member of this House, and is well known to many of the members even of this parliament. He is not a man who

measures his phrases. He is a great master of gibes, and flouts, and jeers; but I do not suppose there is any one who is prejudiced against a member of parliament on account of such qualifications. My noble friend knows the House of Commons well, and perhaps he is not superior to the consideration that by making a speech of that kind, and taunting respectable men like ourselves as being a 'blustering majority,'* he probably might stimulate the *amour propre* of some individuals to take the very course he wants, and to defeat the bill. Now, I hope we shall not fall into that trap. I hope we shall show my noble friend that we remember some of his manœuvres when he was a simple member of this House, and that we are not to be taunted into taking a very indiscreet step, a step ruinous to all our own wishes and expectations, merely to show that we resent the contemptuous phrases of one of our colleagues." Mr. Disraeli concluded by again advising his followers to accept the views of the House of Lords, and not to endanger a bill upon which the heart of the people of England was set.

His advice was accepted, and the Public Worship Regulation Act was read a third time in the House of Commons amid general cheering.

It must be admitted that the results anticipated from the passing of this Act have not been attained. Yet the fault lies not with the measure, but with those who have to administer its provisions. So long as the Episcopal bench displays its present timidity, and the mandates of a court of

*"I have therefore to deny, in the most formal and positive manner, that I ever used the phrase 'blustering majority' with regard to the other House of Parliament. I did use the word 'bluster,' but with this reference: it had been argued by somebody in this House that we were bound to take a particular course, because the House of Commons was very resolved, and because, if we did not take that course, this bill would be lost. I have always objected to the argument, when there is a difference of opinion between the two Houses, that it is the privilege of the House of Commons always to insist, and the duty of the House of Lords always to yield. It is not uncommon to use that argument when we come to the last discussions in conflicts of that kind, and I venture to think it is an argument of a nature which may justly be designated by the term 'bluster.'"—*Lord Salisbury, House of Lords, August 6, 1874.*

law are permitted to be calmly ignored by the sentenced clergyman, it is scarcely possible to expect any good from the enrollment of the Public Worship Regulation Act in the statute-book. It has not "put down Ritualism," because those who have been intrusted with the suppression of this pernicious schism have failed in their duty. When the culpable leniency and looseness with which the whole subject has hitherto been treated is exchanged for the firmness and severity the question deserves, the wishes of Mr. Disraeli and those who thought with him will be carried out. It may be distasteful to prosecute a man who possesses every virtue inscribed upon the tombstone, yet if he persistently continues to break the law, no more mercy should be shown to him than to any other mischievous and guilty citizen. It has been considered no answer to the despotism exercised by Charles I. that he was a faithful husband and an affectionate father; and in like manner it can be deemed as no palliation for the offence of a clergyman practising what has been forbidden, and teaching what he has solemnly sworn not to maintain, that he is hard-working, unselfish, and beloved by his parishioners. It is a simple question whether the law is to be obeyed or not, and the rebellious "priest" who refuses to give in his adherence to its provisions puts himself on the same level as any other law-breaker, and is equally deserving punishment. When a vicar or perpetual curate in the Church of England who manipulates and interprets after his own fashion the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, and who uses his position and authority to Italianize a Protestant communion, is treated with the same rigour as is meted out to a trustee who acts contrary to the provisions of his trust, then, but not till then, can we hope for any benefit to accrue from the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act. To brand the Act, however, as a failure is to condemn it before it has been properly worked and set in operation; it has failed only because

the designs of those who drew up its clauses have not been carried out.

As a pleasing change from the theological bitterness which the conduct of this measure through parliament frequently occasioned, Mr. Disraeli was now called upon to take the chief part in one of those ceremonies where his ornate and formal eloquence was always so effective. A bronze statue of the late Lord Derby had been erected by public subscription within the garden inclosure of Parliament Square, and it fell to the lot of the prime minister to perform the ceremony of unveiling it. Before a vast audience, and amid general cheering, Mr. Disraeli let fall the canvas draped around the figure, and disclosed the well-remembered form of Lord Derby, represented in his robes as chancellor of the University of Oxford. "I have unveiled," said Mr. Disraeli, when silence had been restored, "the statue of a man who for half a century influenced the opinion and largely contributed to the history of his country. Although the high position to which he was born may have facilitated his entrance into public life, he was one of those men who, under any circumstances and in any lot, would have become memorable. His fiery eloquence, his haughty courage, the rapidity of his intellectual grasp, which probably never was surpassed, his capacity for labour, and his mastery of detail, which never were sufficiently appreciated, because the world was astonished by the celerity with which he despatched public affairs—all these combined to produce a man who must have become celebrated. His statue looks upon that famous Parliament of England in both Houses of which his public life was about equally divided. Amid the great transactions of fifty years he was one of those who took a leading part, not only in those assemblies, but from out of the great affairs of this empire during that period there are three measures which figure in colossal proportions, and which were the result of his own individual energy and creation. He abolished slavery—he educated Ireland—and he reformed parlia-

ment. Forty years ago, when the first measure was brought forward with that great object, it would have failed had it not been for his bold determination; and only within recent years, as prime minister of England, he carried that great Act which supplied the deficiencies and repaired the injustice of the previous Act, because it restored to the working classes of this country those franchises which in 1832 they were deprived of.

"The sculptor who has raised this statue equal to the great occasion has, in the beautiful bronzes that relieve the pedestal, commemorated other events in the life of Lord Derby besides those which passed in the senate and the council chamber.* He has depicted him as the learned chancellor of a renowned university, and as the generous president of that committee of charity and patriotism which, in an unprecedented crisis in the history of the industry of England, mitigated the sufferings of the population of that great county where he was born, where his ashes repose, and which he loved so well. Lord Derby was far too sensible a man to undervalue the advantages of wealth and lineage, but he valued them because they gratified his highest ambition, and they allowed on his part a large performance of duty. He was one of those rare characters that I am proud to say can be found in no other country but our own. He combined the pursuit of politics with all the tenderness of domestic life. We have raised this statue to him not only as a memorial, but as an example; not merely to commemorate, but to inspire."

When one cabinet suddenly and unexpectedly succeeds another there is seldom an opportunity for the immediate introduction of an original policy. There is little more to be done during the first

session of office than to carry out the measures brought forward by the outgoing ministers. Within this limited sphere of action the Conservative government had been content to confine its labours. "You must look on Her Majesty's government," said Mr. Disraeli at a banquet given to the ministers at the Mansion House towards the close of the session, "as a body of men who have been called on unexpectedly to assume the reins of power, and who, finding themselves in that position, have dealt as practical men as well as they could with the urgent forces and business of the hour. We are now on the eve of a period when we shall have more time and more leisure to consider the condition of affairs, and to prepare such measures as we think are necessary and adequate." Nothing very original had been expected, and nothing had been attempted. At the Treasury, at the war office, at the admiralty, matters had been conducted very much after the same fashion as had been instituted by the late heads of those departments. Parliament was prorogued by commission (August 7, 1874), and in the speech from the throne the results of the session were summed up.

The thanks of Her Majesty were tendered "for the readiness with which you have made provision for my son, Prince Leopold, on his attaining his majority." The relations with all foreign powers continued to be friendly, "and the influence arising from those cordial relations will be employed, as heretofore, in maintaining the obligations imposed by treaties, and in promoting and consolidating the peace of Europe." The famine in India had been attended with little mortality, "a result mainly attributable, under Providence, to the precautions taken by my Indian government. The strenuous exertions of my viceroy, and of the officers serving under him, merit my high approbation." Then allusion was made to the financial policy of the chancellor of the exchequer. "I have seen with pleasure the considerable

* These events, thus commemorated, are Lord Derby advocating the abolition of slavery in the House of Commons in 1833, his installation as chancellor of Oxford University twenty years later, his attendance as chairman of the Manchester Relief Committee in 1865, and his presence as premier at a cabinet council in the year 1867.

reductions which you have been able to make in taxation. The total abolition of the sugar duties will not only confer a benefit on the consumers of an article in universal demand, but will also prove of much commercial advantage to the nation. The removal of the duty on horses is another measure well calculated to encourage the trade and industry of the country. Concurrently with these remissions, and with a further reduction of the income tax to a rate which is little more than nominal, you have been enabled to make important grants from the general revenue towards services which, though of imperial concern, have hitherto been defrayed either exclusively or in an undue proportion out of local rates." The abolition of patronage in the Church of Scotland would, it was trusted, remove an ancient cause of controversy and strengthen the Kirk. Similar hopes were entertained as to the Public Worship Regulation Act. "The Act for the better regulation of public worship in the Church of England will, I hope, tend to prevent or allay the unhappy controversies which sometimes arise from the difficulty experienced in obtaining an early decision on doubtful points of law, and a definite interpretation of the authorized form of public worship. Such controversies, even when they occur between persons loyally desirous to conform to the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church, beget serious evils; and their speedy termination by competent authority is a matter of grave importance to the interests of religion." The speech closed with a reference to the legal labours of the session, and to the alterations effected in the licensing system by Mr. Cross.

At the usual Guildhall banquet, held on lord mayor's day, Mr. Disraeli was called upon to return thanks for Her Majesty's ministers. It was the only speech of public importance that he delivered during the recess. The prime minister was in excellent spirits, and regarded the future in a most sanguine mood. The country

was prosperous and content; the different departments of the government were working most satisfactorily, and the deficiencies left by the late administration were being rapidly rectified. All was rose colour. "This is not the first occasion," Mr. Disraeli said (November 9, 1874), "on which I have had, in this hall, the honour of returning the thanks of Her Majesty's government for the distinction which you have offered us. Six years have elapsed since I had that proud office to fulfil. And, my lord mayor, I could not help reflecting, when you proposed this toast, on what had happened in those six years. More remarkable events than probably have occurred in any similar interval of modern history, perhaps I might say of ancient history. In that interval of time larger armies have been brought into the field than are upon record—using instruments of destruction which the most speculative men of science fifty years ago could not have contemplated. During that interval empires have been created and empires have disappeared. Republics have been proclaimed in sight of your own cliffs and of your own dominions. More sovereignties have been abolished than during the revolutionary war; and among them that immemorial and sacred throne, which emperors and kings for centuries had failed to control, has vanished like a dream. Yet during all this period, amid all this change and turbulence, the people of England have remained tranquil and content. It was not always so. But a few years ago, comparatively speaking, in the memory of many, I dare say of the majority within this hall, the proclamation of a republic in a neighbouring country seemed the sign of sedition throughout the whole of this country. This very city for one day was virtually placed in a state of siege. You had to appeal to the great military genius of the age again to conduct your operations. The civil power rallied around him with a manifestation of patriotism which will never be forgotten. Artillery was planted upon your bridges, and for four

and twenty hours women and children were not allowed to leave their roofs. It is impossible to refrain from asking what has produced this great change? It has occurred because the people are contented; they have obtained that which they most earnestly desired, and because the legislature thought it was politic and just, it was given with no grudging hand, and they are tranquil because they are content."

The prime minister then referred to a statement made by Mr. Gladstone in a recent speech, that a Conservative government could not last, because it had been returned by the Conservative working classes.

"My lord mayor," he continued, "one of the consequences of this change in public feeling on the part of the people of this country is—although I have no intention of touching on the forbidden province of party politics, still, as a matter of fact and as explanatory of my position at the present moment, I may say—one of the consequences of this change of feeling is that Her Majesty has called to her council a Conservative administration. I have been alarmed recently by learning, from what I suppose is the highest Liberal authority, that a Conservative government cannot endure, because it has been returned by Conservative working men, and that a Conservative working man is an anomaly. We have been told that a Conservative working man cannot be Conservative, because he has nothing to conserve—he has neither land nor capital; as if there were not other things in the world as precious as land and capital! My lord mayor, I may be allowed in passing to observe that there are things in my opinion even more precious than land and capital, and without which land and capital themselves would be of little worth. What, for instance, is land without liberty? And what is capital without justice? The working classes of this country have inherited personal rights which the nobility of other nations do not yet possess. Their persons and their homes

are sacred. They have no fear of arbitrary arrests or domiciliary visits. They know that the administration of law in this country is pure, and that it is no respecter of individuals or classes. They know very well that their industry is unfettered, and that by the law of this country they may combine to protect the interests of labour; and they know that though it is open to all of them to serve their sovereign by land or sea, no one can be dragged from his craft or his hearth to enter a military service which is repugnant to him. Surely these are privileges worthy of being preserved? Can we therefore be surprised that a nation which possesses such rights should wish to preserve them? And if that be the case, is it wonderful that the working classes are Conservative?"

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by briefly referring to the labours of the past few months, and to the general condition of the country. He could look back, he said, to the records of the last session with satisfaction, as he believed there had been introduced into the statute-book laws which had met with the entire sympathy of the people of England. He congratulated his audience on the general condition of the country. Seldom had England been more prosperous and contented. There was a considerable revival of trade, and a great promise of increase in their commercial transactions. The revenue was realizing all that was expected from it. As was England, so were her foreign possessions and colonial empire. The colonies were loyal and flourishing, and it was certainly not the policy of the Conservative party in any way to detach themselves from all colonial ties, and rid themselves of responsibility; on the contrary, they were resolved to consolidate and confirm that colonial empire. The terrible famine in India had been averted, he said, generously oblivious of the "gibes, and flouts, and jeers" of Lord Salisbury, "by the sagacity and energy of two persons—the present viceroy of India and my noble friend the secretary of state

for India." With regard to foreign affairs it was the wish of the government to maintain peace in Europe, and in that wish all the powers agreed. "Her Majesty's government," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "have on every occasion been prompt and ready to exert their influence in that manner they believe best fitted to promote the blessings of peace. They believe that moral influence on the part of England is not to be despised; but their definition of moral influence is not giving advice which is not asked for. They believe that when applied to by any state for assistance in difficulties which ought to be terminated, a generous adoption of the position of adviser or mediator is one which we should never refuse; and we believe also that some moral influence may be exercised at this moment when disorder and confusion prevail in some countries, which we regret, by exhibiting to Europe the example of a state which has solved the great political problem by combining order with liberty, and which, if some of those troubles which are anticipated may occur, will, while it still vindicates the principle of religious liberty, not shrink from proclaiming the principle of religious truth."

Some little excitement was created owing to certain remarks in this speech being keenly commented upon. At this time the personal quarrel between Prince Bismarck and Count Arnim, the late German ambassador at Paris, was attracting considerable attention; the count had been arrested, his house had been forcibly entered into, and his private and official papers seized. It was said that Mr. Disraeli strongly disapproved of these high-handed proceedings, and that when in his Guildhall

speech he alluded to our working men not being "afraid of political arrests or domiciliary visits," he was contrasting the security enjoyed by an English artisan with the insecurity to which a Prussian noble might be subject. This interpretation Mr. Disraeli contradicted. A paragraph was inserted in the *Times*,* in which it stated that Mr. Disraeli did not mean to refer in any way to the German government; that his observations had nothing specially to do with Count Arnim; and that in what he said about arrests and domiciliary visits he was simply thinking of the generally deplorable condition of the continental aristocracy, which, whether in Paris or Berlin, in Vienna or St. Petersburg, was never safe, when under suspicion, from the pursuit of the spy and the visit of the police official. This disclaimer was regarded by the enemies of the prime minister as an acknowledgment that a grave mistake had been committed, and as a clumsy fashion of getting out of a difficulty. It was said that Mr. Disraeli had been forced to insert this apology at the instigation of Prince Bismarck, and that he had unnecessarily dragged his country through the mire. "The classic land of liberty," said a French critic, "has in its turn been invaded; the prime minister of England can no longer speak without incurring and submitting to censure from Berlin." We shall soon learn what truth there was in this assertion.

* "An entirely unwarranted construction having been in one quarter placed on the expressions used by the prime minister at Guildhall on the subject of arbitrary arrests, we are authorized to state that in making these observations the case of Count Arnim was not present to his mind, for the sufficient reason that the arrest of Count Arnim was not arbitrary but in accordance with the laws of his country."—*Times*, November 16, 1874.

CHAPTER XI.

"A CRUCIAL SESSION."

THE resolve which Mr. Gladstone had long been meditating was now to be carried out. Disgusted with the Conservative triumph, soured by the divisions among his party, and absorbed in his new hobby, theological polemics, the ex-premier made up his mind, not absolutely to quit political life, but at all events to resign the leadership of his followers. He saw no public advantage, he wrote to Lord Granville, in continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party, and that at the age of sixty-five, after two and forty years of a laborious public life, he thought himself entitled to retirement. "This retirement," said Mr. Gladstone, "is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life. I need hardly say that my conduct in parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which I have heretofore acted; and whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support." This decision was much regretted by both the political parties in the state; still it was felt that, considering the position of public affairs, there was no occasion for a very brilliant leader to conduct the duties of an Opposition. If Mr. Gladstone wanted rest, or was more interested in literary pursuits than in the study of political manœuvres, now, if ever, was the time for him to sever his connection with the Liberal party. The Conservatives were for a time firmly established in power; it was useless therefore for a man of the calibre of Mr. Gladstone to waste his time and strength in attacks that must for the present be fruitless; and since all that a leader of

the Opposition then had to perform was to watch the bills introduced by the Conservatives, such a task might safely be intrusted to a politician of inferior ability: the more especially as it was understood that Mr. Gladstone did not retire from public life, but would always be at hand, in seasons of emergency, to counsel and direct his party.

The duty of selecting a successor to the late leader exercised not a little the minds of the Liberals. As Mr. Lowe had the gift of creating sudden but fervid animosities, his claims were at once set aside. Mr. Bright was already a leader in the country, but he was not suited for the leadership in parliament. Mr. Goschen had severed himself from his party on the question of household suffrage in the counties, and was consequently not in the running. Mr. Forster, who at one time appeared the favourite on account of his long and eminent services in the state, was not quite in harmony with the Nonconformists on several religious questions; he declined, therefore, to allow himself to be nominated, on the ground that he could not reckon upon that general support without which it would be impossible for him to fulfil the duties of leader. Finally the choice fell upon the Marquis of Hartington, the heir to the dukedom of Devonshire, whose social position gratified that admiration for rank always conspicuous among men of pronounced Radical opinions, whilst his intellectual gifts failed to arouse the jealousy of the more eminent among the party. The selection has been a happy one. At first it was the fashion to sneer at the position occupied by the new leader, and to laugh at the idea of a Lowe, a Forster, a Vernon Harcourt, a

Bright, and a Goschen holding themselves subject to a man who was indebted entirely for his authority to the fact that he was the eldest son of a duke. Yet Lord Hartington, on the various occasions when he has had to lay down a definite policy to his party, has proved himself a man of tact and excellent temper, of sound judgment, of no little eloquence, and of considerable debating power.

Parliament was opened February 5, 1875. At first it had been expected that the Houses would have met under the auspices of the presence of the queen; but, owing to the illness of Prince Leopold from typhoid fever, Her Majesty was unable to attend. From the contents of the speech from the throne, an active session was anticipated. Measures for simplifying the transfer of land and completing the reconstruction of the judicature were to be introduced; the dwellings of the working classes in large towns were to be improved; the sanitary laws were to be consolidated and amended, and steps were to be taken to prevent the pollution of rivers; the laws relating to friendly societies were to be amended; a bill for the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Acts was to be introduced, as well as a measure for improving the law as to agricultural tenancies; the better security of the subject from personal violence was to be provided for, and a public prosecutor appointed. With regard to foreign affairs England was at peace with all the powers; Spain had called the Prince of Asturias to the throne under the title of King Alphonso XII.; it was hoped that the East African slave trade would soon be extinguished; peace had been maintained on the Gold Coast; the adoption of a wise and humane system of native administration in South Africa would be considered; and the provinces of India, thanks to an ample harvest, had been restored to prosperity.

In the debate on the address Lord Hartington came forward as the leader of the Opposition, and criticised the policy of the

government. He considered the legislative proposals of the government as wise and beneficent, and hoped that the programme would be carried out. He, however, regretted the omission of measures touching local government and local taxation. Then he was sarcastic as to the various reforms which a perusal of Conservative newspapers and of Conservative speeches had prepared him to expect would follow from the establishment of a Conservative government, and yet all mention of such reforms was conspicuous by its absence. Eloquent Conservative journals, and still more eloquent members of parliament, had constantly declared that under the Liberal government Ireland was in a state of disaffection. Why then, Lord Hartington asked, was no allusion made to Ireland? He had expected to hear that the garrison in that country was to be doubled, and martial law proclaimed. What had Conservatives not said as to the condition of the army and navy under the Liberal government; yet in the speech from the throne he heard nothing of the grievances of officers to be redressed, and nothing of additional ships to be built! Again, what had not been alleged as to the condition of the colonies and of the home affairs of the country under the Liberal government, by the Conservative party when in Opposition; yet there was no mention made to remove colonial abuses or to relieve taxation!

"Now, I submit to the House," said the leader of the Opposition in conclusion, "that I have been drawing a picture which is scarcely, if at all, exaggerated. The materials for it I have drawn simply from the declarations which have been made by hon. gentlemen opposite, in thousands of speeches and in newspaper articles, both during the existence of the late government and since their retirement from office. I now commend to the House the careful consideration of the difference between the wise and temperate policy actually presented by Her Majesty's government for the consideration of this House, and

that which from the writings and speeches to which I have referred we were not unnaturally led to expect."

Mr. Disraeli replied. He began by gracefully alluding to the position occupied by Lord Hartington, and to the advantage of an Opposition possessing a leader. He had learnt with great satisfaction that ministers were to meet parliament with a recognized authority in one who would undertake the chief business of their political connection. "It has been the boast," said Mr. Disraeli, "of the House of Commons for a long period, that even when political passion runs high and party warmth becomes somewhat intense, there should exist between those members of both parties who take any considerable share in the conduct of their business, sentiments of courtesy, and when the public interest requires it even of confidence, which tend very greatly to facilitate the business of the country to the public advantage. I trust that feeling will in our time never cease; and I can truly say, without making or intending to make any observation of a personal or invidious nature, for gentlemen on this side of the House, that it is matter of satisfaction to us that the chief business of our opponents is to be conducted by one who in the course of many years in this House has obtained equally our respect and our regard." Then as to the wish expressed that the programme of the session might be carried out, Mr. Disraeli hoped that such would be its fate, but it was dangerous to prophesy. "At present all I can say is," he replied, "that with the assistance of the House it is our intention to bring forward and carry the measures we have enumerated; but you may have revolutions, you may have great catastrophes, you may have ecclesiastical misconceptions, you may have a revival of those burning questions which were the pride of the ministry of the noble lord and his colleagues. I cannot answer for what may be the consequences if such unhappy circumstances should occur; but at present this is our programme, and I trust that the business

of the session—when it is over—will offer upon the whole a fair fulfilment of the expectations which we have held out." He also said that, when the fitting moment arrived, measures of local administration would be introduced. Then as to the charge of Lord Hartington, that there was a contrast between the speeches made by Conservative members and the articles written by Conservative journals and the actual proceedings of a Conservative government, Mr. Disraeli thus replied:—

"I will not attempt to vie with the noble lord in the masterly picture which he drew of the contrast afforded between the measures brought forward by the Conservative government and the speeches made I know not where, and the articles written, which I never read, by what he calls the Conservative party. There is a most ingenious, but at the same time most inconvenient course—which I have noticed among many hon. gentlemen opposite—and to night the noble lord has assumed the habit as if he had been born to it—of seeking out the most violent speeches made by the most uninfluential persons in the most obscure places, and the most absurd articles appearing in the dullest and most uninfluential newspapers, and saying these are the opinions of the great Conservative party. The great Conservative party has been legitimately and I believe very fairly represented on the bench opposite, when we were enjoying that freedom which is the noble appanage now of those whom I see before me. The opinions of the Conservative ministry are now expressed from this bench, and we are responsible for them and will not shrink from that responsibility. So I must protest against the grotesque reminiscences of the noble lord." Mr. Disraeli concluded by expressing sympathy for the illness of Prince Leopold, and for the natural anxiety of the sovereign.

Before the business of the session commenced in real earnest, a dispute between the House and one of the constituencies had to be settled. John Mitchell, a well-known

Irish agitator, had stood for Tipperary and had been elected. The antecedents of the man were most unfavourable. He had been sentenced to transportation for his share in the rebellion of 1848, had broken his parole, and had fled to the United States. There he became naturalized as an American citizen, and had taken up his abode at New York. A vacancy occurring in the representation of Tipperary, he offered himself as a candidate and issued his address from across the Atlantic. He was in favour of home rule, of the destruction of the established church, of universal tenant right, and of the liberation of the Fenian prisoners. His return was unopposed, and he landed at Queenstown amid much cheering. That an unpardoned convict should take his seat in Westminster was, of course, out of the question. Mr. Disraeli at once moved, "That John Mitchell having been adjudged guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years, and not having endured the full term of his sentence nor having received pardon under the great seal, has become and continues to be incapable to sit in parliament." Some little discussion arose upon the motion. If, as the lawyers had decided, John Mitchell could not be compelled to serve out his original sentence and could not be proceeded against for breaking prison, what was the disability, asked the Opposition, under which he laboured? In reply the legal advisers of the crown asserted, that as the man had been adjudged a felon and had not been purged, either by pardon from the crown or by having completed the term of his sentence, he was still a felon, and as such could not sit in the House of Commons. The Opposition contended that this view of the case was, if not incorrect, at least new, and suggested that the question should be referred to the examination and decision of a committee.

Mr. Disraeli, however, resolved upon having no dallying with the matter; it was not a party question, but a House of Commons question, and the return of such

a man was an insult to the chamber, not for an instant to be permitted. "This is a question," he said (February 18, 1875), "upon which the House of Commons ought to decide, and to decide with promptitude. I deeply regret that we are called upon to decide it; but we have to do our duty, and if we have let us do it completely. Do not let us say that we really do not know what are our privileges. Do not let us say that we must have a committee to examine into musty precedents, and that we really have so little confidence in our own intelligence and our own resolution that a convicted felon may come to this table, although almost every member of this House disapproves his taking a seat, because no one has the courage to come forward and ask the House of Commons to declare it our law and what is also the ancient law of the country. I trust therefore that we shall decide, and decide without doubt upon this question." It was no part of his duty, contended Mr. Disraeli, to inform the House what a felon was or was not. "But it is part of my duty," he added severely, "if a felon is returned to parliament, comes to this table, and claims to be a representative of the people, so long as I am sitting in this place to call upon the House of Commons to avenge its outraged privileges and to say, that 'until, either by the favour of the crown or by your own dutiful conduct, you shall have cleared yourself from this flaw, you shall not take your seat in the House of Commons.'" What a striking contrast does the frank and spirited conduct of Mr. Disraeli on this occasion afford to the evasive and half-hearted behaviour of Mr. Gladstone under somewhat similar circumstances, which recent events have made us far too familiar with?

The motion of the prime minister was then agreed to, and a fresh writ ordered to be issued for Tipperary. The convict was again returned by a large majority, but he headed the poll in vain. The Irish court of Common Pleas decided that the votes given to Mitchell counted as nothing; and

Captain Moore, the Conservative candidate, who had come in as a very bad second, was consequently pronounced member for Tipperary.

Another instance of the freaks of a constituency at this time also exhibited itself. The borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, which had hitherto been considered a respectable and intelligent constituency, raked amid the dunghill of lost reputations, and selected as their representative one who rejoiced in the distinction of being "the most unscrupulous maligner of his day." Dr. Kenealy was one of those acrid and malevolent minds which constant disappointment and pecuniary difficulties so often create. He had written books and poems which fell still-born from the press, and he had gone to the bar, though he had failed to attain any fame beyond that of an Old Bailey lawyer of the second rank. Thanks to the recommendation of the judge whom he afterwards so unscrupulously calumniated, he was selected to wear the silk of a queen's counsel. His conduct during the celebrated Tichborne trial gave the finishing stroke to his career; his ill-balanced advocacy of the notorious butcher, his clumsy but spiteful attacks upon the bench, the gross and venomous suggestions upon which he based his line of defence, are fresh within the memory of us all, and are among the most degrading chapters in the history of the bar. The man was disbenched and disbarred, and treated with the contempt and disgust such a miscreant deserved by all whose good opinion was worth the having. A social pariah and a legal outcast, it pleased the insane taste of the rabble of the borough of Stoke to select "the doctor" as their representative. He was returned, and proceeded to Westminster to take his seat.

As an instance of the light in which Dr. Kenealy was regarded, the newly-elected member was unable to find any one to introduce him. He walked up to the table to take the oath alone. "I have to point out," said the speaker, "that according to the

usual practice of this House, when an hon. member appears for the first time in this House it is necessary that he should be introduced by two members. I now ask whether there are two members of the House present to introduce the hon. member?" A dead silence followed this question. No one was desirous of touching pitch and being defiled. "I am, sir, aware of the practice," remarked Dr. Kenealy, in his most humble tones; "but I am not aware of any rule or law of the House to deprive a new member of the right of taking the oath and his place in this House. This practice of the House, I believe, has been established since 1830." The speaker declined to be drawn into an argument. "It is not for the hon. member," he said sternly, "to discuss the rules of the House. At present all I have to do is to point out to the House that the practice now observed has been in existence since the year 1688."

This ceremony might have been insisted upon, had not Mr. Disraeli generously come forward to propose that the rule be dispensed with. This intervention was both kindly and just. Dr. Kenealy, after all, had been duly elected; he was not a convict; he was willing to take the oath; the rule as to introduction had only been drawn up to establish identity; and it was impossible to think that on this side of Gehenna there could be two Kenealys. An idle ceremony ought not, therefore, to have barred the entrance of the member for Stoke into the popular chamber. "I hope, sir," said Mr. Disraeli (February 18, 1875), "that in this case the ordinary rules will not be enforced. The identity of the new member," he sarcastically remarked, "cannot, I believe, be questioned. Although, for myself, I think the rule in question an excellent rule—and it is one which I trust will be strictly observed in the future—yet I think there are circumstances connected with the present case which render it desirable that we should not insist upon its enforcement." This suggestion was accepted. Dr. Kenealy was permitted to take the oath, and for

the first time since his degradation he was privileged to shake the hand of a gentleman.

The session was undoubtedly a dull one. The measures alluded to in the speech from the throne were introduced, but they gave rise to no especial display of eloquence. Mr. Disraeli himself spoke but seldom, contenting himself with replying to questions, and leaving it to his colleagues to carry through the bills which belonged to their respective departments. The only incidents which tended to enliven the monotony engendered by the consideration of necessary but heavy legislative details, were the numerous questions of 'privilege' that were constantly arising. What with the sensitiveness of Dr. Kenealy, the irritability of the home rulers, and the revelations as to the manipulation of foreign loans, no sooner had one dispute been settled than another quickly came on the scene. The chief agitator was Dr. Kenealy. Scarcely had he taken his seat without any assistance from the usual "godfathers," than he attempted to bring a member to account for having severely criticised, out of parliament, the relations between the witness Jean Luie and the member for Stoke during the trial of the notorious claimant to the Tichborne estates. It was, however, ruled that at the time when such criticisms were passed Dr. Kenealy was not a member of parliament; that the criticisms were uttered out of doors, and referred only to professional misconduct; and that it did not fall within the province of the House of Commons to notice anything said by its members unless remarked of them in their parliamentary capacity. "Personal attacks," said Mr. Disraeli, "are not necessarily questions of privilege. To make it a question of privilege a personal attack must be made in this House, or it must be made against a member of this House in his capacity as a member of this House. In the present case I do not find even the shadow of privilege. The hon. and learned member for Stoke comes forward and says he has

been accused, outside the House, of conduct which certainly is as disgraceful conduct as can well be conceived. But the words were not spoken in the House of Commons, nor at that moment was the hon. member for Stoke a member of the House of Commons. Therefore I think," sarcastically suggested Mr. Disraeli, "it is very clear that the course which the hon. member for Stoke should take, if he be suffering under this criticism and these allusions, is to appeal to those courts of law with which he is so intimately acquainted."

Foiled in this attempt, Dr. Kenealy now made use of the House of Commons to present petitions praying for the release of Roger Castro from imprisonment, and at the same time he accused the three judges who tried the case of gross unfairness. Outside the House of Commons the member for Stoke freely indulged in the most virulent abuse of the judicial bench, but at Westminster he maintained a discreet silence. He had given notice that he would bring the conduct of the judges before the House of Commons; but weeks passed, and the threat remained unfulfilled. Such delay created no little indignation. Mr. Macdonald, the working-man's candidate, boldly told Dr. Kenealy that if there was any truth in the statements he was laying before the country, he was bound to carry out the terms of his notice, and bring the matter before the House of Commons. Mr. Bright was still more outspoken. "It is not right," said he, "to make such statements, I will not say to defame, but to charge eminent judges, and to create in the mind of the people a belief that men upon their trial before the judges and a jury of this country cannot hope for fair, open, and complete justice. I say he has no right to do that, and leave a notice of that kind on the paper week after week and month after month; and I think the House ought to insist that a question of this nature, upon which so much hangs—a question as to the judgment of the House upon the character of eminent judges—that this question ought

not to be left undecided. The House ought to take some steps by which it shall either be adjudged or got rid of for ever."

At last the pressure of the House and of public opinion became too strong for even Dr. Kenealy to resist, and amid a full House, which listened to him in indignant silence, he brought forward his long-talked-of motion against the judges. He asserted that the late government had acted in an unjustifiable and unprecedented manner in instituting a criminal prosecution against "the claimant;" he denounced the counsel for the prosecution for having presented forged evidence to the jury; and he specially denounced the conduct of Lord Chief-justice Cockburn for having prejudged the case by expressing his determination to convict the prisoner, and for having made statements of fact on his own authority to the jury. Under these circumstances he moved for the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the conduct of the trial at bar of the Tichborne case. In the debate that ensued Mr. Disraeli took part. "The motion is made," he said (April 23, 1875), "in consequence of an alleged miscarriage of justice—a miscarriage due to corrupt means and corrupt judges, and there can be no more important question brought under the consideration of the House of Commons than a case of that kind, if it be well founded. I have listened with much attention and interest to the hon. gentleman, and I have acted as impartially as one can do upon matters which for a considerable time have necessarily occupied the attention of everybody in the country; and I am bound to say, having listened to the hon. gentleman, he does not appear to me to have brought forward a case which would in any way authorize the interference of the House of Commons." Mr. Disraeli then reminded the malignant ex-counsel that instead of bringing the case before the House of Commons he could have appealed to the secretary of state against the conviction of "the claimant," yet he had not done nor had he appealed to the lord

against the conduct of the judges—both of which courses would have been wiser than the one he had adopted.

"The hon. gentleman, however," continued Mr. Disraeli, "now comes to the House of Commons complaining of a great miscarriage of justice. He has a day selected for hearing his case. He has an opportunity of stating it fully and completely without any interference, if not to a friendly, yet, I must say, to a most courteous audience. He cannot, therefore, say that he has not been able to do justice to his case, or that he has appealed to those who have not had the candour to give him their calm attention. Yet what do we find? What is the result of all these great and solemn preparations? Why is the House of Commons arrested in the progress of its labours? Why are we threatened throughout the land with horrible catastrophes and impending revolutions? For what? To listen to a thrice-told tale; and if it has been told not without force, we must remember that it has often been repeated, and that the hon. gentleman comes this evening with all the advantages of a practised actor, who, after the provinces, comes to seal his reputation on the metropolitan stage." Mr. Disraeli then entered at some length into the charges of misconduct at the trial brought forward by Dr. Kenealy, and showed without much trouble that they were utterly unfounded. And here he availed himself of the opportunity of passing an eloquent eulogium upon the lord chief-justice.

"It is against the lord chief-justice that this charge is made. It is against his corrupt misbehaviour that the country has been agitated. What is the evidence that has been brought forward to-night by the hon. member for Stoke, in order to substantiate a charge which never ought to be ventured upon unless it can be vindicated by testimony of the most irresistible nature? Why, sir, we know something about Lord Chief-justice Cockburn. He is a man of

scendent abilities. He was for a con-

siderable time a member of this House. He did not belong to the political connection of which I am proud to be a member; but I was proud always of being a member of the House in which Lord Chief-justice Cockburn sat. His eloquence is remembered in this House; and when he left us to ascend to the highest tribunal almost within the realm, he sustained the reputation which he had attained here and in the courts of his country with learning and majesty. But it is not only as an eminent judge that he has distinguished himself. He has shown himself a jurist and a publicist of the highest character—a man who can be trusted with the most important national interests, and who at a critical period vindicated those interests and sustained the honour of his country. But we must look to the idiosyncrasy of individuals when we have to decide upon questions like the present. The lord chief-justice, although he is a man of great learning, although he is a man equal to the exercise of the highest functions, and has employed a great portion of his life in the gravest and most responsible pursuits, yet he is a genial and social being also. He is not one of those individuals who enter saloons with Rhadamanthine gravity; he seeks, and properly seeks, some distraction from the cares and labours of a most exhausting profession and position; and is it to be endured,” asked Mr. Disraeli, referring to a distorted accusation brought forward that Sir Alexander Cockburn had told a lady whom he met out at dinner that he intended to sentence the claimant to penal servitude, “that misrepresentations of the casual conversation in society of such a man are to be brought forward on no authority whatever, and to be made the foundation of the gravest charges in one of the greatest assemblies in the world? We know very well—there is nothing in my mind more to be deprecated than the introduction of this private gossip of private life here. I have often—the House will pardon me for saying it—heard what I never heard

when I first entered this House, of observations and opinions that have been expressed by hon. gentlemen on either side in the lobby repeated in debate. That I look upon as a most loose and unmannerly proceeding. . . . And so to-night, because the lord chief-justice goes to a party and meets—I regret that the name of the lady has been unfortunately introduced—one whom everybody acquainted with her knows to be a most charming lady—I hope she will not be too much mortified by her introduction into this ruder society—but because she, being interested in the question, pressed the lord chief-justice for an opinion, which evidently by the first account he desired to avoid and tried to parry with some of that gay fun which is permitted under the circumstances, all England is to be agitated;* we are advancing upon a volcano, revolution is to happen to-morrow; and if a certain resolution is not carried this evening, to-morrow is to be marked with the darkest fate, and probably even this House of Commons may never again assemble.”

The business they had to consider, continued Mr. Disraeli, was the most absurd, the most flimsy, the most preposterous that had ever engaged the attention of the House. The country had every confidence in the judicial bench, and there was no wish, except among a minority misled for mischievous ends, to turn the House of Commons into a great court of appeal. “Let the House for a moment,” concluded Mr. Disraeli, “consider what would be the consequence of the adoption of this resolution, throwing aside all those melodramatic foreshadowings as to the probable consequences of its rejection. What must be the practical result if the House were to adopt this resolution, and were to act upon it? The House of Com-

* This lady had said to the lord chief-justice that Lord Rivers believed so firmly in “the claimant” that she was of opinion he would never give him up even if he was found guilty. Whereupon the lord chief-justice jokingly said, “Present my compliments to Lord Rivers, and tell him that in that case he may probably have to accompany his friend to penal servitude.”

mons would become a great court of appeal, and we should at last have secured that object which has baffled the ingenuity of the most distinguished law reformers 'elsewhere.' There is not a case that could be tried in this country, the issue of which would not have to be decided here; not a question of master and servant that would not certainly be brought before this assembly. It might become a great court of appeal, but it would soon, under such circumstances, cease to be a House of Commons. I trust that the House will show to-night—in a manner which cannot be mistaken—will show the country that it has treated this question in the spirit which it deserves, and that we have availed ourselves of this opportunity which has been given to the hon. gentleman in a manner becoming this House, and I hope reassuring to the country. The hon. gentleman has had his occasion, he has been before the assembled House of Commons in no slight numbers, he has stated his case with ability and art, he has had every opportunity of marshalling his facts and managing his inferences, he has put forward his strongest points, and what have they amounted to? They have amounted to this—to bring conviction to the minds of every one who has heard him that all this agitation, all this tumult that has disturbed the country for months, had no solid foundation; that there has been no miscarriage of justice; and that England and Englishmen may still be proud of their institutions and confident in the administration of the law."

On a division the motion of Dr. Kenealy was rejected by a majority of 432—ay, 1; noes, 433. The solitary ay was Major O'Gorman.

The most dramatic incident of the session was, however, that which led to the rapid passing of the Merchant Shipping Act through the House. Mr. Plimsoll, the member for Derby, one of the kindest and warmest-hearted of men, but whose philanthropic activity was somewhat injured

by an unsound impulsiveness and want of tact, had taken the British merchant seamen under his special protection. He maintained that ships were sent to sea totally unfitted for a voyage; that at the first storm which tested their rotten timbers they sank with all hands on board, and that then their owners were handsomely recouped for their loss by the insurance offices. He had so persistently advocated the dangers to which merchant seamen were liable from the selfish cruelty of the "ship-knackers," that the subject had been forced upon the attention of the government, and the president of the board of trade had been intrusted with the duty of passing a measure through the House, entitled, the Merchant Shipping Bill. At the same time leave was given to Mr. Plimsoll to bring in a measure of his own upon the subject, which, since he had made the matter a special study, it was thought might help the government in making their own scheme more specific and comprehensive. As the session advanced, Mr. Disraeli, in the face of measures which the country deemed more important—for as yet no great sympathy had been evinced in favour of the shipping bill, the country considering that the dangers incurred by our merchant seamen had been much exaggerated—felt himself bound to withdraw the measure introduced by the president of the board of trade in favour of the agricultural holdings bill, which was then attracting much attention. Both bills could not be passed during the session; and if one must be sacrificed, Mr. Disraeli was of opinion that the measure which the nation seemed somewhat apathetic about should be thrown over. The government, he said, were most anxious to pass the merchant shipping bill, but so much business stood in the way that they found it impossible. It must therefore be deferred to next session, when it would be re-introduced at the first opportunity.

Upon hearing this decision, Mr. Plimsoll, who was suffering from extreme irritability of the nervous system, brought

on by over-work in investigating the numerous cases of shipping frauds that came within his notice, completely forgot himself. He lost his temper, and was loud in his denunciations of the shipowners who sat in the House, and of the unfeeling conduct of the government in abandoning a bill of so much urgency, and which had to deal with the saving of human life. He moved the adjournment of the House. He entreated Mr. Disraeli "not to consign some thousands of living human beings to undeserved and miserable death." He declared that, ever since the commercial marine had been committed to the care of the board of trade, matters had been getting worse and worse, "with the aid of shipowners of murderous tendencies outside the House, and who are immediately and amply represented inside the House, and who have frustrated and talked to death every effort to procure a remedy for this state of things." Then becoming all the warmer in the heat and bitterness of his advocacy, he asserted that every winter hundreds and hundreds of brave men were sent to death, their wives were made widows, and their children were made orphans, in order that a few speculative scoundrels, in whose hearts there was neither the love of God nor the fear of God, might make their unhallowed gains. "There are shipowners," he cried, "in this country of ours who have never either built a ship or made a new one, but who are simply what are called 'ship-knackers,' and I accidentally overheard a member of this House described in the lobby by an ex-secretary of the Treasury as a 'ship-knacker.'"

This remark was met by loud cries of "order;" but Mr. Plimsoll was now in too wild and vehement a state to be controlled by the ordinary rules of debate. He boldly accused a member of the House by name of being a "ship-knacker;" and when again called to order bawled out, "I am determined to unmask the villains who send to death and destruction"—He was not allowed to finish

the sentence. This time he had gone too far, and he was called upon by the speaker to explain whether he used the word "villains" with any reference to any member of the House. Mr. Plimsoll angrily replied that he did, and that he declined to withdraw the expression; nor in spite of all the persuasion of the speaker would he consent to apologise. Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House, now moved that Mr. Plimsoll should be reprimanded by the speaker "for his violent and disorderly conduct." The member for Derby then withdrew; but on it being represented to the House that he was suffering from great mental excitement, at the suggestion of Mr. Disraeli it was agreed that the debate should be adjourned for a week, and that Mr. Plimsoll should not be required to attend in his place during that interval.

The rest wrought the desired effect. At the time appointed Mr. Plimsoll appeared in the House, and apologised frankly and sincerely for his conduct. Mr. Disraeli rose and regretted that he had moved that Mr. Plimsoll should be reprimanded. Had he been informed when he proposed that motion, that the hon. member for Derby was in an ill state of health, he would have taken another course. "I should have felt," he said, "that the case was one of a peculiar character, and to be treated in a very different spirit. I should have looked upon it as I look upon it now—as a case of overstrained sensibility in a man excited by his devotion to a cause which—however many of us may differ as to the measures which he proposes as remedies—all must acknowledge to be a great and a good cause." He rejoiced to see Mr. Plimsoll again in his place, and he felt sure the House would receive the apology in the same spirit in which it was offered. He therefore moved that the order of the day be discharged; the motion was then agreed to.

Thus ended this unhappy ebullition of temper, yet it tended to serve the interests of Mr. Plimsoll better than any other scheme he could have planned. To the

apathy of the country which Mr. Disraeli had complained of with regard to our merchant seamen, there had succeeded the deepest interest in their fate. Mr. Plimsoll was the hero of the hour. Meetings were held at every seaport in the kingdom, urging upon government to introduce a measure which should prevent ships from going to sea in an unseaworthy condition, from being too heavily laden, and from falling a prey to the wiles of the "ship-knackers." From the pulpit, in pamphlets, in the daily journals, ministers were exhorted to put a stop to the reckless proceedings of shipowners. This enthusiasm was not to be ignored. A temporary measure was rapidly brought forward, and carried through the House, which gave the board of trade for a year extraordinary powers of detaining ships, which caused shipowners to take the responsibility of fixing a load line for each separate cargo, which prohibited deck loads, and which enacted that grain should not be carried in bulk when it formed more than a third of the cargo. Thus, as Mr. Disraeli afterwards confessed, thanks to Mr. Plimsoll, a measure became law in ten days which under other circumstances would have taken as many weeks.

Meanwhile the government was busy carrying out its programme. Mr. Cross, the home secretary, had early in the session introduced his measure to facilitate the improvement of dwellings for the working classes in towns, which has been so instrumental in checking the spread of disease among the lower classes, and in reducing the mortality of the country. The object of the bill was to put down "rookeries," and in their place to erect suitable tenements to be inhabited by the poor, and so avoid the evils of overcrowding and of the want of proper sanitary appliances.* Mr.

* It is much to be regretted that recent proceedings will tend greatly to hamper the good which ought to result from the development of this Act. When Mr. Cross's bill became law it was understood that land occupied by buildings condemned to destruction was to be kept for the erection of new artisans' dwellings; and at first the Metropolitan Board of Works stipulated whenever it sold land which had been occupied, that for eighty years to come only working men's houses should be erected upon it. Early in 1882,

Hardy had brought forward his regimental exchanges bill, which rendered legal the payment of money between officers who, on account of health or for other reasons, might wish to make exchanges of regiment or station among themselves; the bill, he said, would promote contentment, whilst it would not entail any loss upon the public. The budget had been laid before the House after a plain business-like fashion. It did not create much excitement, for there was no deficiency to meet, nor a substantial surplus to dispose of. The chief feature was the proposal for the gradual paying off of the national debt, by the creation of a new sort of sinking fund involving an annual charge in every budget for £28,000,000. By this arrangement the chancellor of the exchequer calculated that by 1885, £6,800,000 of debt would be paid off, and in thirty years' time £213,000,000. The other measures of the session, in which, however, Mr. Disraeli took no part, were the bills introduced by Mr. Cross to modify the labour laws, the friendly societies bill, which was intrusted to the chancellor of the exchequer, and the public health bill. In the House of Lords the lord chancellor had reproduced the judicature bill, and the land titles and transfer bill. Owing to the opposition the judicature bill encountered it was postponed, and a new measure of a temporary character introduced.

The measure which was the first to attract the attention of the prime minister, was the one which had for its object the apparently hopeless aim of rendering Ireland tranquil. It was found necessary still to continue exceptional legislation. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, as secretary for Ireland, was the spokesman of the government in laying before the House the minis-

however, the board changed its views, insisting only that the land so sold should be devoted to the purpose named for the space of ten years. The result of this decision will of course be that builders will run up shabby tenements simply to last ten years and no longer. At the end of that time there will be another eviction of the industrious poor, in order to make room for the erection of a class of houses that will be more remunerative. It is hoped that the Metropolitan Board of Works will be compelled to abide by its original stipulation.

terial measure. It continued the repressive Acts already in force, but with certain mitigations. The lord-lieutenant was no longer empowered to imprison persons in proclaimed districts who might be found abroad at night, nor summarily to suppress seditious and treasonable newspapers. With regard to the use of arms, the government asked for a renewal for five years of those restrictions contained in the Peace Preservation Act forbidding such use. It was also proposed to continue the Westmeath Act for another two years.

On the second reading of the peace preservation bill (March 23, 1875) Mr. Disraeli addressed the House, defending the government measure from the strictures passed upon it by the Opposition. Lord Robert Montague had moved an amendment condemning exceptional legislation for Ireland; he considered that the time had now arrived when, instead of persevering perpetually in a system of coercion for Ireland, they should make a stand, and declare that such a system should continue no longer. We give the reply of Mr. Disraeli at length, since it has never formed a portion of his published speeches. From its contents we see the nature of the objections of Mr. Butt, who was the chief opponent to the bill, and how the provisions of the measure differed from the Coercion Act passed by the late government.

"This is a measure," began Mr. Disraeli, "of necessity, framed in a spirit of conciliation. It is a measure to preserve peace, and therefore is unjustly represented by its opponents as a measure to create coercion. 'What is in a name?' I think a moral may be drawn on that question in this night's debate, for it is only by representing this measure to preserve peace as one to create and enforce coercion that the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite have found any substance or foundation. Now, I would remark in the first place, in considering this bill, that, when it was first introduced some sessions ago, it contained many clauses which were principal subjects

of invective and opposing arguments by those who now maintain similar opinions with regard to this bill, and yet all these clauses have been omitted. The chief points which were brought under the consideration of the House, and which were held up to its indignation as violations of the liberty of the subject and as proposals contrary to the traditional freedom of this country, find no place in the bill now under consideration. These points were—restrictions on a free press, the establishment of what was then described and denounced as 'curfew,' and the power given to magistrates of summarily closing houses. These are the three things which in former discussions were particularly inveighed against as violations of the liberties and rights of Her Majesty's subjects. None of those matters are treated of in this bill; and yet only by a side wind have hon. gentlemen opposite, during this discussion of two nights, had the candour to admit that those main questions of odium, according to their view of the case, are entirely omitted from this bill.

Well, then, there are no doubt points which we think it our duty to insist on, and which I trust this House will by a commanding majority prove that we have not been mistaken in recommending to the House. The points which we insist on are—restrictions on the possession of arms. When the hon. and learned gentleman who has just addressed us [Mr. Butt], and worked much on that subject, touched on the clauses of the bill, he omitted to remember that the restrictions on arms were much modified in this bill as compared with past bills. The hon. and learned gentleman has said much upon domiciliary visits, and that any policeman at his own pleasure could make a domiciliary visit to seize arms. It was never in the power of any policeman at his own pleasure to make a domiciliary visit. I believe such a power was not given in any one of the Acts to which the hon. and learned gentleman has referred, and certainly it is not given in

the bill before the House. In former days—indeed, I believe, within the last two or three years—there were general warrants intrusted to the police for a term of three months, which they might use. I will not say that was an abuse. It might have been at the time a necessary arrangement by our predecessors; but it is one which we have terminated, and there are only two places in Ireland where a general power of that kind prevails.

“Well then, the hon. and learned gentleman said, ‘What is the prospect for Ireland if you are to proceed with this sort of legislation? It is very true you may modify and mitigate your bills; it is very true you have omitted some odious clauses; but the result is coercion, it always has been coercion, and what security have we that again in five years we shall not have a new bill similar to this?’ The hon. and learned gentleman continued, ‘This is not the way you have dealt with England. England was just as disturbed as Ireland; there was as much sedition in England at the earlier part of this century—and indeed for the first quarter of this century—as in Ireland; and yet you have not carried any coercion bills for England. You carried no coercion bills to meet the Corresponding Society or any of the seditious combinations.’ But does the hon. and learned gentleman mean to say that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which was then unfortunately too frequently resorted to, was not an act of coercion? The hon. and learned gentleman particularly alludes to the year 1819—when he says the state of England was more dangerous and more menacing than that of Ireland—when there was as much sedition, as many secret societies, and as much danger to the state impending—and yet we did not have recourse to a policy of restriction and coercion.* What does he say about the Six Acts, which were introduced by Lord Sidmouth and Lord

Castlereagh? Look at the names of those Acts. The first of those Acts passed for England was an Act against the training of people to the use of arms—that was an Act of restriction. The second Act authorized justices of the peace to seize arms that might be used for purposes dangerous to the public peace; what does the hon. and learned gentleman say to that? The third was an Act to prevent seditious meetings and assemblies. The fourth was an Act against blasphemous and seditious publications. The fifth was an Act containing severe restrictions against the press. And the sixth was an Act to prevent delay in the administration of justice in the case of certain misdemeanours. Certainly no coercive legislation for Ireland has exceeded the scheme which was devised and carried into execution by these celebrated and odious Acts. And that is an answer to the hon. and learned gentleman’s argument about the hopelessness of this system of legislation and the folly of supposing that Ireland will ever be tranquil; because if the state of England was then the same as the state of Ireland now—if that state was altered and checked by coercive legislation—why should not Ireland in due season be as tranquil, as prosperous, and as contented as England, without the unhappy influence of exceptional legislation?”

Mr. Disraeli then for the moment turned away from Ireland to indulge in a personal statement. Ever since his Guildhall speech, when he compared the insecurity of a foreign aristocracy with the security enjoyed by the British working classes, and his subsequent explanation of what he had been at the time alluding to, the Liberals and their journals had been as loud as they were malicious in their jubulations over the humiliation of the prime minister. It was asserted that the explanation inserted in the *Times* had been wrung from Mr. Disraeli by the menacing attitude of Prince Bismarck who had demanded an instant apology, and that the prime minister had been forced, in the face of a

* In the summer of 1819 occurred the Peterloo massacre. The disturbances which followed this event were of so grave a nature, that the government resolved upon introducing the notorious Six Acts.

scornful Europe, meekly to eat dirt and to drag his country through the mire. How true these reports were we shall now learn:—

“Mr. Speaker,” proceeded Mr. Disraeli, “there is one point to which the hon. and learned gentleman adverted with regard to myself, on which, with the permission of the House, I will say a few words. It is always disagreeable to enter into personal explanations; but I hope that the House will allow that I rarely trespass on them in this way. The hon. and learned gentleman quoted a passage from a speech which I made, not in this House, but which at the time attracted some public notice. I said then, as I say now, that the working classes of England inherit personal privileges which the nobility of other nations do not enjoy. That is my opinion; by that opinion I stand; and I shall always be prepared, when an opportunity offers, to prove it. Well, a stupid—some think a malignant interpretation—was given to those words, and a ridiculous story went about that in consequence of using those words a representation was made to Her Majesty’s government, and that I made an apology to a minister who believed that he was referred to. I have never gone out of my way to contradict this story; but I think that, as an hon. gentleman has talked to-night about Her Majesty’s government truckling to Prince Bismarck, the House will perhaps allow me to make one remark. *There is not the slightest truth of any kind in the statement that was made, that any allusion or remonstrance—direct or indirect, public or private, by male or female—was ever made to me, or to any member of Her Majesty’s government upon that subject.* When the erroneous charge was made, that I had alluded to the conduct of Prince Bismarck—of whom I was thinking then as little as I was thinking of Rory O’More—I thought it idle to answer the remarks in the newspapers, for I never grudge them their sport with public men; but when, after a few days had passed, I found that one or two journals were gravely announcing that the

peace of Europe was endangered by such remarks, I thought the matter had become ridiculously grave, and I asked a friend of mine to put in a paragraph in the papers, for which I have never been even thanked, either by Prince Bismarck or by anybody else.”

Having made this statement, Mr. Disraeli returned to his criticism of the bill. “The other points we have insisted upon,” he continued, after making a few remarks as to the modifications introduced touching the restrictions on the use of arms, “are with regard to the taking of unlawful oaths and the sending of threatening letters. These are the points on which we have insisted in this bill, which, I maintain, is to preserve peace, but which is described as a measure to inflict coercion. Who could be injured—who has ever been injured—by any of the arrangements contained in these clauses? Who are the persons who send threatening letters in Ireland? Many of these letters are of a most mischievous and disastrous character, and are often characterized by a bloody truth which, a very short time after a letter has been received, is confirmed by the fact of assassination. Who is in favour of extending mercy to such men, or who can be opposed to legislation against such practices? It is idle to tell us a story about the apprentice of a butcher, or somebody, who sent a threatening letter to his master in order to get his wages increased. Of course, in such a case there is no question of human life; and there is no proposal which could not be made to appear ridiculous if it were illustrated by some extreme case of that kind. But we who know the state of Ireland—the House of Commons—who know that Ireland has suffered from the tyranny of threatening letters, will not be misled, I am sure, by remarks of that sort. These, then, are the points upon which we ask the House to support us in carrying this bill. We do not attempt—we do not ask you, we do not wish you—to interfere with the freedom of the press. We do not

ask you to re-establish the 'curfew,' which some years ago you denounced with so much eloquence. We do not ask you to give the magistrates the power of summarily closing public houses. But we do ask you to agree to restrictions upon arms, much milder than those which were proposed and carried by our predecessors—restrictions which more or less prevail in almost every country, and which, as all agree, have been exercised in Ireland, whatever party has filled the councils of Her Majesty, with temperateness and moderation. We ask you at the same time to assist us in preventing the taking of unlawful oaths and the transmission of threatening letters. We ask you again what possible injury such legislation can inflict on any innocent being? and to remember what support, encouragement, and spirit it must give to the loyal subjects of Her Majesty."

Mr. Disraeli then referred to the continuance of the Westmeath Act. He briefly sketched the history of that Act—how the agrarian outrages which had been committed in Westmeath necessitated special legislation; how such legislation had been asked for by Lord Hartington; how a committee sat to inquire into the condition of the disaffected county; and how ultimately the Act became law. "This legislation, then," he continued, "with respect to the county of Westmeath, and the general policy then adopted for suppressing agrarian outrages there, was not merely the policy of a minister, but was the policy of the House of Commons. All parties, represented by their chief men, were persuaded on the grounds brought forward by a minister well entitled to the confidence of the country, that there was in Westmeath and in the adjoining districts a dark conspiracy and sanguine confederation which had more or less existed for a century. We knew before those discussions were finished, before those investigations terminated, who the very assassins were who were hired. We knew, I may say, who was the king of the assassins,

the individual who exercised an irresistible power in that county over a panic-stricken people. Well, then, I say that policy was adopted by the House of Commons. It was their own policy, founded on the proposition of a secret committee—at least, a committee of great reserve, because we sat with closed doors.* The House of Commons was persuaded of the facts I have stated. They were not the transient incidents of a session or a year. The evidence before us was that this was an ancient institution of murder, spoliation, and anarchy; and we knew we were dealing with that which the greatest energy and the greatest wisdom could not tame or subdue in the course of a few years. I say, then, it is idle for the hon. and learned gentleman, and for other members who have spoken in the same spirit, to pretend that we have no evidence to justify us in again bringing forward and continuing what is called the Westmeath Act.

The Westmeath Act must be continued from the conviction of the House of Commons of its necessity—a conviction founded upon the information obtained by the committee, and from the deliberate, mature, and defined opinion of parliament generally, that this system of outrage must be put down. Well, sir, I am surprised, remembering those days, remembering the deep interest in that committee, remembering that when the House met every member of the committee was surrounded by his friends and companions, who wished to obtain some information of the startling and terrible revelations that we had heard, remembering all that, was it not astounding—for it was only five years ago that that occurred—to hear hon. gentlemen opposite—men, too, filling the great position of county members, deeply and intimately connected with that part of the country—getting up in their places, doubting, and more than doubting, the existence of the conspiracy?

* As I have said in a former part of this work (see speech on Westmeath Act), Mr. Disraeli objected to a secret committee, but at the special request of Lord Hartington he consented to become one of its members.

for one hon. member told us he believed Ribbonism did not exist at all, and that there was nothing like a system of terrorism in Ireland—that the whole thing was an invention, or something to that effect.* I think that was astounding.

“There was once a member of this House, one of its greatest ornaments who sat opposite this box or an identical one, and indeed occupied the place which I now unworthily fill. That was Mr. Canning. In his time, besides the discovery of a new world, dry champagne was invented. Hearing everybody talking of dry champagne, Mr. Canning had a great desire to taste it, and Charles Ellis, afterwards Lord Seaford, got up a little dinner for him, care of course being taken that there should be some dry champagne. Mr. Canning took a glass, and after drinking it and thinking for a moment, exclaimed—‘The man who says he likes dry champagne will say anything.’ Now I do not want to enter into rude controversy with any of my hon. friends opposite who doubt the existence of Ribbonism; but this I will say, that the man who maintains that Ribbonism does not exist is a man who—ought to drink dry champagne.

“Having touched upon a few points in this debate and gathered some few ears in a well threshed field, I wish the House before it votes to clearly understand the issue before us. Hon. gentlemen opposite can hardly suppose that it is very agreeable to our feelings to introduce bills which they look upon as coercion bills. It is not agreeable, nor is it flattering to the people of England, that there should be a necessity for such bills now in the government of Ireland. If we declined to continue this legislation, for which as ministers we are not responsible, I dare say that the session would be calmer; and though I cannot doubt that, even if there were no coercion bills, the fervid imagination of Irish gentlemen would not fail in introducing a

sufficient number of agreeable grievances to relieve the dulness of our parliamentary life, still I think they will acknowledge that, had we not brought forward this measure, our business would have been easier at least for the session. But hon. gentlemen opposite argue as if it was the interest of an English government to bring in coercion bills for Ireland. They argue as if the people of Ireland were watching with eagerness the passing of this measure. On the contrary, they only, like us, regret the sad necessity for such proposals. But what in the present case I wish to impress upon hon. gentlemen opposite is this—that we do watch these proposals with some satisfaction, from the conviction that the spirit which animates them, instead of being a fierce and suspicious spirit, such as has often, I fear, in old days animated and inspired our legislation for Ireland, affords evidence of our desire to extend to that country the same friendship which we entertain for Her Majesty’s subjects in England. But we cannot shrink from making proposals which we deem necessary for the preservation of order in Ireland. Hon. gentlemen opposite can hardly hope that they can ultimately prevent this bill being passed. They have given a fair opposition to it; I entirely acknowledge that, nor do I myself for a moment wish that they should be debarred from an adequate opportunity of expressing their opinions.

“But,” said Mr. Disraeli, appealing to the Home Rulers, who were then busy agitating for the legislative independence of Ireland, “if when this measure is passed, they will in their counties assist us by conveying to the people there the assurance that these Acts are but a mitigated continuation of that unhappy policy which was inevitable under the circumstances; if they will impress upon their constituents the conviction, which when impressed upon them by their leaders they will entertain, that there is in the parliament at Westminster and in this House of Commons a

* It was Mr. Bagen who made this assertion, and thus showed how familiar he was with the condition of his country.

bonâ fide wish to act well with our Irish brother representatives, and to assist them in all their proposals which we believe are really for the advantage of the country—that this legislation which we are now proposing, and which the great majority of both sides of this House say with us is inevitable, is a solemn though sad duty which we have inherited and which, filling these places, our duty to the queen requires that we should bring forward—if they look upon it in that light and acknowledge the necessity for passing it, they will find, I am sure, on both sides of the House a true sympathy with their sincere efforts for the advancement of Ireland in those many measures of which they have given notice, some of which affect the rights and some the material interests of the country. They will find, I say, in the parliament of England a sympathizing body, who will feel proud when they confess that a true experience of the House in which they sit has proved to them that it is capable of representing the United Kingdom.”

The amendment of Lord Robert Montague was defeated by a large majority. It was felt that, though the Fenian organization was no longer in a position to do mischief, yet no little disaffection still existed in many parts of Ireland, and therefore it would have been most unwise to abandon altogether the restraints and restrictions of exceptional legislation. The bill introduced by the Conservative government was the first step towards a gradual relaxation of the severity of former coercion Acts; but such relaxation, it was considered, should be gradual, and not sudden. By the Peace Preservation Act no new laws were enacted, but only the existing laws continued, and in several instances modified. To repeal all the clauses in the coercion Acts would, in the uncertain state of Ireland, simply have resulted in a return to the bloodshed and agrarian outrages which had formerly disgraced that country. The objects of the measure advocated by Mr. Disraeli were to preserve peace in Ireland,

to keep capital in the island, and to give the inhabitants an opportunity of advancing in the path of material progress and prosperity. That these ends were not attained was due, not to the Irish policy of the Tory party, but to the mischievous advice of the Home Rulers being carried out in its stead.

During the session the prime minister did not take a prominent part in supporting the different measures introduced by his colleagues. He spoke but seldom, leaving the bills brought forward by the cabinet to the care and control of the special ministers who had been intrusted with the task of passing them through the House. Mr. Disraeli confined himself to the general supervision of public business, and to the various questions of privilege which were constantly coming up for decision. The tactics of the Opposition, too, taxed his leadership not a little. His political foes, instead of presenting a distinct and united opposition, were broken into three almost antagonistic sections. There were the Home Rulers, who were then planning their system of obstruction which they afterwards so irritatingly but successfully carried out; there were the advanced Liberals, and there were the old-fashioned Whigs. Each of these sections had to be treated separately; and the consequence was, as Mr. Disraeli afterwards complained, that instead of having to contend with one Opposition, he had to contend with three distinct Oppositions. To manage the House under these conditions was a matter of some difficulty, and interfered not a little with the progress of public business. Though the prime minister did not come prominently before the country in delivering any great and important speeches, he was far from idle; what with thwarting the machinations of the obstructionists, refuting the arguments of a sweeping and pernicious Liberalism, and discussing in committee the objections which a stubborn and exclusive Whiggism advanced, his time was fully occupied.

One measure, however, Mr. Disraeli took

under his special protection, and moved the second reading of it. In the previous session he had pledged himself to bring the question of security for improvements by agricultural tenants before parliament, and he now proceeded to fulfil his promise. The subject had frequently been discussed in the House of Commons, and some thirty years ago had been especially associated with the name of Mr. Pusey, the member for Berkshire. The object of Mr. Pusey, who, according to Mr. Disraeli, was one of the most distinguished country gentlemen who ever sat in the House of Commons, was to secure the tenant right of the occupier, and at the same time to guard the just rights of the owner. To use the words of Mr. Pusey, his object was "to secure to the tenant the advantage of his unexhausted improvements, and to prevent the deterioration of the soil." The opposition his ideas encountered was, however, too strong, and he was ultimately compelled to relinquish the struggle. The agricultural holdings bill, which was introduced in the Upper House by the Duke of Richmond, and of which the second reading was moved by Mr. Disraeli, carried out in the main the views of Mr. Pusey, and accomplished all he had been contending for.

"The question of land tenure," said Mr. Disraeli (June 24, 1875), "has been much examined with respect to a neighbouring country—Ireland. We have legislated upon it; and that no doubt has much tended also to stimulate the feeling on the question. But the view that Mr. Pusey took of this matter is one which cannot be impressed too completely on the House. When he came forward to advocate what was then for the first time called tenant right, it was to protect, as he believed, the interests of the owners of the soil—to place them in a stronger position—as well as to place the occupiers in a juster position, and to remove the only circumstance which, in the arrangements of the different classes connected with agriculture, might lead to discontent, and be the pretext of ultimate

changes in the tenure of land or the conduct of estates which he deeply deprecated, and which had nothing whatever to do with the particular possible grievance which he wished to combat. Well, these views are now, as I said, still prevalent, and within the last few years have considerably extended. No doubt if you take the case of a tenant-at-will, a yearly tenant, it is to be deprecated that he should be placed in a position in which he is not protected so far as regards the capital which he invests in the soil; and it is no doubt a subject to be lamented that there should be any circumstances in existence which prevent that application of capital to the soil which it is the interest of all classes alike to encourage. It is highly to be deprecated at all times, that in the mutual arrangements of classes like the owners and occupiers of the soil of England—classes on whom we so much depend for the good order of the country—there should be anything which would be the cause of latent discontent or disturbance."

To obviate the possibility of any dissatisfaction arising, continued Mr. Disraeli, the government had introduced their agricultural holdings bill, which had passed through the House of Lords without a division. The measure proposed as a principle to secure compensation to the tenant for unexhausted improvements; and to the owner, compensation for waste and injury which resulted from the breaking of covenants or contracts. Improvements were divided into three classes, and different conditions for compensation were attached to the three classes. In the event of the landlord and tenant disagreeing as to the amount to be paid for compensation an arbitrator was to be appointed; and if that failed in settling the difficulty, appeal might be made under certain circumstances to the county court. "The bill," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "meets, I think, what is a want, and it seeks to do no more. It is complete of its kind. It does that which Mr. Pusey was unable to do in

his time. It classifies the different improvements in agriculture in a manner which I think is comprehensive and complete. I feel persuaded that if passed it will act kindly and beneficially throughout the agricultural world, and that it will prove to be in every way adapted to remedy and remove those evils of which we are conscious and which we certainly ought to get rid of."

This measure led to much discussion. It was complained of by the Opposition, that since the clauses of the agricultural holdings were not compulsory, but purely permissive, no real practical good would result from the bill. It simply left matters as they were before. It was true, argued the advocates of compulsory legislation, that on certain conditions compensation was to be given to the tenant on the expiration of his tenancy; but if the landlord preferred to let his land, stipulating that no such compensation was to be given, there was nothing to prevent him from so doing. Again, with regard to security of tenure, the bill laid it down that one year's notice was to be given, instead of the six months which had formerly sufficed for that purpose; yet if the landlord preferred to give only six months' notice, he was perfectly at liberty to act according to his inclinations. Consequently the Opposition strained every effort to compel the government, by amendments and hostile criticisms, to change the tone of the bill from being permissive into being compulsory.

This Mr. Disraeli very rightly declined to do. He had no intention of imitating the policy of the late cabinet by indulging in a system of harassing legislation. Landlords and tenants could arrange their business, without the state stepping in to interfere with the freedom of contract. To suspend freedom of contract in a country like England between two classes of the community, was, he said, an evil which ought at all times to be avoided. No case had been made out for the adoption of compulsion. In various counties—in Lincolnshire, in Yorkshire, in

Nottinghamshire, and in other districts of the country—the "customs," which practically governed all the relations between landlords and tenants, and which had been found by experience to work remarkably well, were wholly permissive. Why then should the bill, which was also permissive, be a hardship or prove a failure? Indeed, he asserted that as long as rent was an open question, any attempt in the direction of compulsion must fail. What was to prevent a landlord saying to his tenant, "You can have your farm for nine years at £1000 a year for the first eight years, and £3000 for the ninth year, if you avail yourself of the compulsory clauses of the Act; but if you do not, the rent for the ninth year will be as before, £1000?" Introduce compulsion, and the landlords would take care on every occasion to contract themselves out of it. It was impossible to frame a measure which would give satisfaction to all classes. The government had drawn up a bill which laid down all the great principles of tenant right that had been contended for, and nothing could be plainer or simpler than the means by which the various matters in question might be settled, both easily and without expense. To those who did not want the bill the option was given to them to come under its provisions or not, as they pleased. The principle of the bill, carefully explained Mr. Disraeli, was to secure compensation for unexhausted improvements; and the measure indicated the mode by which compensation was to be given to the tenant for executing such improvements, provided they were carried out with the consent of the landlord.

"It may be all very well," said Mr. Disraeli, alluding to the speeches of Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. Lowe, Sir Thomas Acland, and others, who were in favour of compulsion—"it may be all very well for hon. and right hon. gentlemen to treat with affected contempt the notion that our legislation should be founded on permission, but *permissive legislation is the*

character of a free people. It is easy to adopt compulsory legislation when you have to deal with those who only exist to obey; but in a free country, and especially in a country like England, you must trust to persuasion and example as the two great elements, if you wish to effect any considerable change in the manners and customs of the people. Right hon. and hon. gentlemen opposite seem proud that on all occasions they are the advocates of compulsion in legislation. I do not envy them the lordly attributes they arrogate to themselves. I am not sorry," he laughed, "if they pursue a policy founded on the principle of compulsion, because, I think, so long as they do there is less chance of their changing their position. I trust that those who are sitting on this side of the House will give no encouragement to a policy which I believe to be so pernicious; that they will advocate that course upon public measures which they believe to be beneficial to the country; and that they will trust to example and persuasion to induce a free and intelligent people to adopt their views and follow their example. . . . I trust the House will not hesitate as to the course it will take. We are no longer threatened with a division to-night, but we have had some counsels given to us which would, if followed, paralyse our future actions. I trust the House will not be influenced by them. Rest assured that we are embarking in this bill in a business which is dear to a great portion of the people of this country, and which, if with skill and temper it is carried into effect, will, I believe, remove many causes of discontent and misunderstanding, and confirm and increase those relations of confidence and amity which have for so long a period, and so greatly for the advantage of the country, existed between the owners and occupiers of the soil."

The counsels of the Opposition failed to convince the majority in the House, and the Agricultural Holdings Act was enrolled in the statute-book as a permissive measure.

Towards the close of the session (August 4, 1875), Her Majesty's ministers were entertained at a banquet at the Mansion House. The health of the ministers was drunk with much enthusiasm, and Mr. Disraeli, on rising to return thanks, was loudly cheered. His speech on that occasion did not certainly tend to depress his audience.

He did not know, he said, that representing Her Majesty's ministers he had any gloomy intelligence for the citizens of London. The country was prosperous and the people were content. With regard to foreign affairs peace prevailed, and in his opinion peace would prevail. The colonial empire had been consolidated and developed. As to home affairs he was somewhat alarmed that, as dessert to the banquet, a critical summary of the session was expected from him. "But perhaps, with your indulgence," he said, addressing the lord mayor, "I may make some not party, but rather historical comments, on what may have occurred in great places during the present year. And here I would observe that in considering affairs in our parliament, and in endeavouring to form a tolerably impartial judgment of what occurs, especially in the most active house of the legislature, there are two circumstances which it would be just and convenient to remember. In the first place, it should be recollected with regard to the present session that it has been a session in which, as the ministry, we were called to perform that ceremony which, in homely language but in popular phrase is generally described in this country as 'redeeming your pledges.' During the five years we spent in opposition we endeavoured to impress upon the country our sincere convictions that the time had arrived when political change was no longer required, when the distribution of political power was no longer the problem to solve in the country, but that its intelligence and energy should be directed to the improvement and elevation of the condition

of the people. We impressed upon the public mind that sanitary reform, for example, was the great object and need of the day, including, in that phrase so little understood, most of the civilizing influences of humanity.

"Well then, when we had acceded to power it became our first duty, and I can say our most ardent desire, to bring into practice that policy which, in a place scarcely less responsible than government—our place as a parliamentary opposition—we had ever advocated and enforced. And this, among other reasons, is the main reason why the government were obliged to bring forward a greater number of measures than under ordinary circumstances, and in an ordinary session, they would have been inclined to produce. It was a *crucial session* for a party acceding to power; for it must be remembered and admitted that the last session of parliament was one which never gave an opportunity to the present administration to announce their policy in a way in which it could be consistent with the public necessities to bring it forward. There was another circumstance which should be recollected, in attempting to form an impartial opinion on the conduct of the government and of parliament during the session. The late administration had one advantage over the present, which cannot be denied. They had to encounter a homogeneous opposition. They brought forward their measures and discussed them with the ability which men of commanding talents possessed; we offered our comments, and the House and the country gave the verdict upon the issue, and was content. But in bringing forward our measures we do not meet a homogeneous opposition. We have to meet three oppositions. We have to meet first our predecessors in office, who would fain also be our successors. We have to meet those who with great ability develop and advocate what may still be called the Whig policy of the hour; and when we have combated, I will not say conquered, them

in argument, a new class of argument on the same question is brought forward by the powerful Radical party in the House of Commons, and we have again to encounter this second opposition. But even when that task is fulfilled the Irish party, the Home Rule party, rise, and they view the question of the hour according to their aspect and according to their views and wishes, and this third opposition must be encountered by the government. I do not say there are not advantages in this process. I do not for a moment deny that it is of importance and advantage to the state that a public question should be viewed under various aspects by the ablest men in the country. It is possible that for the cause of truth, and even for the advantage of the statesmen who are responsible for the conduct of affairs, this parliamentary course may not be inconvenient and unprofitable; but this I will say, that this new feature of parliamentary life is a costly one as regards time, and in a large and liberal view of the conduct of public affairs those who are unmindful of these circumstances are persons incapable of offering a sober opinion on the conduct of public life."

In addition to these disadvantages, continued Mr. Disraeli, there was also, when the Conservative party acceded to power, the Irish difficulty. Ireland was tranquil, yet such tranquillity could only be maintained by the passing of laws which were manifestly a deviation from the principles of the constitution. The protection of life and property, and the due administration of justice, could only be secured by exceptional legislation. Mr. Disraeli then entered into the history of the measure brought forward by the government for upholding peace in Ireland, and repeated very much what he had already said a few weeks before in the House of Commons. The tactics of the three-headed Opposition and the Irish question naturally delayed, he said, the business of the government; but as soon as the opportunity offered the measures mentioned in the speech from the throne were

brought forward. Bills for the improvement of the dwellings of the artisans, for the consolidation and reform of the sanitary laws, and for the improvement of friendly societies, had not only been introduced, but had become laws. The laws regulating the relations between the employers and the employed had also been reformed.

"The legislation of labour, if I may so call it," said Mr. Disraeli, "in this session of parliament has terminated that distinction between classes which has been so long deprecated, and which, if it exists, renders any union in society scarcely possible. For the first time in the history of this country the employer and the employed sit under equal laws. No one can now be imprisoned for breach of contract, while adequate civil remedies have been furnished for that occasion. The law of conspiracy has been dealt with in such a manner that no longer can it be said that an aggregate body of men can be convicted of a crime of which, if one had been tried individually by law, it would be recognized that he was innocent." In addition to these measures, summed up Mr. Disraeli, the judicature of England had been reconstructed and reformed, the transfer of land in the country had been facilitated, and a bill had been introduced regulating agricultural holdings, which, he believed, would tend greatly to elevate and strengthen the landed interest. A session that had busied itself with such details might be called dull, but certainly could not be called barren. Of the eleven measures recommended to the faithful Commons in the speech from the throne, nine had passed.

In conclusion, Mr. Disraeli explained the conduct of the government in dealing with the mercantile marine bill. To no measure had the government given more consideration, but its success from the first was doubtful. When it was launched, it did not glide into the current of the waters with that grace and facility which constitute a happy omen; sometimes it was crank, sometimes it was waterlogged. The public were indifferent to it, whilst the

Opposition attached 150 amendments to the bill. Under the circumstances he therefore felt it his duty to recommend that they should not proceed with the measure. Then occurred that dramatic scene with Mr. Plimsoll as the chief actor. The sympathies of the country were excited in favour of securing the lives of our brave mariners, the Opposition ceased to suggest difficulties, and the result was that a bill was passed in ten hours which under other circumstances, would have taken ten days, and perhaps weeks. Without that ebullition of popular sentiment it would have been impossible to carry through such a bill. It was precisely the aid and assistance desired by the government.

"Such, my lord mayor," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "is the summary of the session. You know the anxiety that is always felt in this country about the harvest. From February to August all sorts of rumours are afloat. Now we hear that rains have been endless, and that the rivers have burst their banks. Now it is that the sun is so scorching that the earth breaks into fissures. Sometimes all our hay is spoiled; sometimes the wildness of the wind passes over our cereal crops, and they lie prostrate and desolate. But as time goes on, the reactionary beneficence of Providence produces very different effects. The inundations subside, and the sufferers call for a shower. The earth that was so baked becomes manageable to the plough. The crops that were prostrate are touched by the zephyr and the sun, and rise again with cheerful golden crests; and though our hay harvest may be terribly damaged, we find compensation in our wondrous roots. The parliamentary harvest is like the harvest of nature. All sorts of rumours and stories are told from February till near the end of July—very little has been attempted, and that little has not been done. Opposition has been factious, and ministers have been blundering; but the time comes when the legislative harvest is garnered; and when the just and intelligent people of England

look to the great result, they say that the legislative labours of their representatives have added to the great total of national happiness."

The observations contained in this speech led to some comment in the House of Commons. On the occasion of the second reading of the consolidated fund (appropriation) bill, Lord Hartington, as leader of the Opposition, objected to many of the statements brought forward by the prime minister at the Mansion House banquet. He denied that the Opposition was a divided body, or that its policy led to any delay in the progress of legislation. He could not congratulate the cabinet upon the measures it had brought forward, since they were simply adopted from materials which had been left in the pigeon-holes of the different departments by the late government. The labour laws were not so much indebted to Mr. Cross as to the matter accumulated at the home office by his predecessor. And the same could be said with regard to the artisans' dwellings bill, the friendly societies bill, and the public health bill. "The government," said Lord Hartington, "have not, in their conduct of these measures, established any principle for the guidance of the House, nor solved any problem, nor attempted to battle with any difficulties; and the bills, such as they are at this moment, are rather the bills of the House than of the government." Ministers, he continued, had no reason to boast of their past labours; the time of the House had been wasted; questions of privilege and other interruptions of the ordinary course of public business had been constantly agitated, which should never, under a wise leadership, have been brought before the House; bills which were not wanted had been passed, and bills which were much wanted had been ignored or postponed; in short, the session had been a failure. "I am bound to express the opinion," concluded Lord Hartington, "which I firmly entertain, and which I believe will be re-echoed by the country—that, compared with many

of its predecessors, this session has been marked by feebleness; that it has been aimless and purposeless, and barren of all benefit to the country and all credit to parliament."

Mr. Disraeli followed the leader of the Opposition. "In war," he said (August 6, 1875), "there is a military evolution which is well known. It commences with a thundering cannonade. When the clouds are dispelled some sharpshooters are seen advancing to the front. Soon a mass of infantry terrifies you by their compact and serried ranks. Then come squadrons of cavalry, trampling the earth, creating a great dust, and waving sabres. But when the clouds have vanished, you find that your enemy has retired to a prudent distance, and this military evolution is called covering a retreat. The noble lord to-night has covered the retreat of his forces; but while he has criticised what we have done in this campaign, I am unable to criticise the conduct of the noble lord and his friends. They have done nothing, for the simple reason that they have attempted nothing. The noble lord has alluded to my description in another place of the three sections of the Opposition. I did not make that reference that those who heard me might infer that the Opposition being broken into three sections was a source of strength to themselves or embarrassment to the government, but to show that the representation of three sets of opinions opposite to us, often contrary and sometimes contradictory, must necessarily lead to considerable—I will not say waste of time, but—expenditure of time. If the noble lord, instead of being what he now appears to have been, the sedulous and silent critic of the government, had only employed his energies and his constant presence in disciplining his forces, and in inspiring them with those homogeneous sentiments upon which he now looks with so much contempt, the noble lord might to-night, when he entered upon the discussion of the policy of the government and

the conduct of the session, have brought forward the cases of rival measures which had been introduced to our notice, and which were candidates for public approbation. He might have referred to the long and determined struggles he had made in favour of some great object, and the hosts—even if they were in a minority—which had supported him, at least by their enthusiasm. But the catalogue of events, so far as the Opposition is concerned, is a barren and ignominious one; and this attempt at the end of the session to bring forward a motion—or rather, to make a speech of this kind—will not cover their failure. The noble lord has talked of my historical account. Well, we have had an historical account from the noble lord this evening of the doings of the session, and that without the excuse of it being made after dinner. Let us follow the noble lord in his criticism, and see what is his case."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to refute one by one the charges brought against the government by the leader of the Opposition. If, he said, the labour laws were indebted to the materials accumulated by the late home secretary, all he could say was that such information had never been known to Mr. Cross. After the same fashion he defended the other measures of the government at which Lord Hartington had sneered—they were original in conception, of great necessity, and warmly approved of by the country. As to the bills that had to be abandoned, such desertion was one of the necessities of parliamentary life. "The noble lord," asked Mr. Disraeli, "has belonged to administrations in his time; and did they not at the end of the session give up measures? Why, I found an eagerness on the part of the noble lord himself to get me to give up our measures at the beginning of July, or rather at the end of June. Indeed, he has been educated in the school of statesmen who have been so accustomed to give up their measures that in his most serious mood, and almost with passionate fervour and glowing words, he

has attacked us night after night because we did not begin in the merry month of May to give up our measures." Proceeding with his defence, the prime minister denied that he had ever charged the Opposition, as Lord Hartington had stated, with factious conduct. "It is not a charge," he said, "which I am in the habit of making. I have passed a considerable part of my time in opposition, and I acted freely when I was in opposition; but I hope those to whom I was opposed generally consider that I was a fair opponent. I remember Lord Palmerston's saying once, 'They accuse us of faction, but faction is only another man's action;' and it struck me there was pith in the remark." He had not accused them of faction; indeed, he had never accused them in any way.

"Well, another great charge," continued Mr. Disraeli, "which the noble lord makes against the government is, that their measures are wanting in principle. What principle? The principle in which it seems they are wanting is the compulsory principle, and the question is whether the country is in favour of that principle? Laws of general application must be founded on compulsion; but in this country, when you are dealing with the manners and the customs of some particular class, or trade, or part of the population, if you have recourse to the compulsory principle, you will do nothing but create bitterness and opposition. It is only by persuasion—the *finest persuasion in the world, which is example*—persuasion in action, that you can influence, and modify, and mitigate habits which you disapprove." It had also been brought forward by the leader of the Opposition, as a matter of complaint against the government, that the constant questions of privilege which had sprung up had lowered the dignity of the House. But was he, asked Mr. Disraeli, responsible for those scenes? Was he responsible for the conduct of Dr. Kenealy, for the strictures of the public press upon matters touching the personal honour of a member of parlia-

ment, upon the annoyance occasioned by the constant noticing of strangers in the gallery? He was not. Throughout all those proceedings he had adopted a policy which upheld the dignity, the freedom, and the power of parliament. "I have no doubt," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "that the points which the leader of the Opposition urged against me were well considered; that the charges were well meditated; and that he had the advice of those who have much parliamentary experience as to the mode in which he was to dispose his arguments and accusations. I ask the House what case has he made out? Has he proved that we have done nothing? Has he proved that he has done anything? I believe the opinion of the country at this critical moment, now that our labours are nearly at an end, will be unanimous on the subject. The country will see in a few days, in the most authentic and official record, the catalogue of the labours of the House of Commons. They are not discreditable to the ministry. They are, I think, manifestly calculated to be beneficial to the country. But I take no credit to myself, whom the noble lord has made the author of all these delinquencies. I take no credit for that authentic catalogue of the achievements of parliament. Though I am placed here to take some chief direction in the conduct of the business of this House and its general management, the House must know full well that it is not my shoulders, or the shoulders of a more gifted man than I, that can bear this burden. I am assisted by those who surround me, by colleagues most able; and I will say this—whether I speak of parliament or of the cabinet—the most devoted colleagues a minister ever possessed. But above all, and beyond all, cabinet or colleagues, what the country is most indebted to for the measures of infinite benefit which have been brought forward this year, and carried successfully, is the patriotism of parliament, and the good feeling and high spirit of gentlemen who sit on both sides of the House."

Six days after this speech was delivered "the catalogue of the labours of the House of Commons" was laid before the nation.

Parliament was prorogued by commission, August 13, 1875. Allusion was made to the past labours of the session. It was hoped that the Peace Preservation Act, while relaxing the stringency of former enactments, was calculated to maintain the tranquillity of Ireland. The Artizans' Dwellings Act would, it was trusted, lead to the decrease of many of the principal causes of disease, misery, and crime; much was also expected from the consolidation and amendment of the sanitary laws. The statutes for the amendment of the Acts relating to master and servant and trade offences, would place the relations of employers and employed on a just and equal footing, and add to the contentment and good-will of the people. The Agricultural Holdings Act had greatly and beneficially enlarged the powers of owners, limited in interest, to offer to their tenants a sufficient security for judicious outlay upon the farms they occupied; and whilst maintaining absolute freedom of contract, a presumption of right had been raised under which a new inducement would be given to expend capital upon the improvement of land. The speech then closed with remarks as to the cordial relations that existed between England and the foreign powers, and as to the encouraging character of the revenue.

During the recess there was much to excite and interest the country. The Arctic expedition had sailed; and all news as to the movements of the two vessels despatched to discover the North Pole were eagerly scanned, and gave much food for scientific comment. The burning questions of labour and capital were again fiercely discussed; and much criticism was passed upon the labour Acts carried through during the session by Mr. Cross. The policy of Lord Carnarvon with regard to our South African colonies—a policy which had for its object, to introduce a federal constitution into the congeries of

South African settlements analogous to that which had been established in the "dominion" of Canada—also attracted at this time considerable attention. The journey of the Prince of Wales to India was cordially approved of by the country; and the progress of the prince throughout his travels was closely watched by his future subjects. It was an event, said Mr. Disraeli, highly advantageous to His Royal Highness, to the United Kingdom, and to India. The tour of the prince was all the more a subject of constant comment from the disturbed condition of the countries under the control of the Sultan, which it was feared might again re-open the "Eastern question." The province of Herzegovina had broken out in revolt against Turkey, and encouraged by the hope of foreign help, was maintaining with fierce energy the cause of the Christians against the Moslems. The impoverished exchequer of the Sultan was unable to bear the strain put upon it; a deficit of over £4,000,000 was announced, and it was evident that a crisis was at hand. Then came that act of repudiation which caused such terrible commotion throughout the financial world. The Sublime Porte informed the world how it intended to deal with its creditors; it drew up a financial scheme which amounted to making a forced loan of £35,000,000 from the holders of Turkish securities, at five per cent. per annum at par.

This act of quasi-national bankruptcy stimulated the insurgents to further efforts; and politicians looked uneasily to this letting out of waters which might soon flood Europe. Herzegovina adjoined Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and on the west the Austrian territory of Dalmatia—the most inflammable parts of Turkey. In those countries the Mohammedan population is little less than four to eleven to the Christian population, and nowhere is the animosity between those who profess the two creeds more keen and bitter. As a rule Turkey is lenient and tolerant to all persons professing different religions; but owing to

the turbulent and mischievous character of the so-called Christians in these disaffected portions of the Ottoman empire, it had been necessary for her to exercise her authority over plotting Albanian, vindictive Greek, and scheming Slav, with an iron hand. She declared that, unless she kept that population down by the stern arm of a military despotism, the jealousies of race and creed were so keen that the Slav would make war upon the Greek, and the Albanian upon his brother who followed a different form of faith. All preferred to make war upon the Turk; but failing the Turk, rather than not fight at all they would make war upon one another. Consequently to such turbulent subjects the Porte was not inclined to act with unusual mercy; and the condition of the Christian population in those districts, though they had in a great measure to thank their own rebellious conduct for the restrictions they were made to endure, was certainly open to reform. The insurrection in Herzegovina, however, which had then spread to Bosnia, taxed all the resources of Turkey; and statesmen anticipated the collapse of the Turkish empire. Yet Turkey was a necessity to England and Austria against Russian aggression; and diplomacy was set to work to preserve the life of the "sick man," and thus maintain peace in Europe. Count Andrassy, the Austrian chancellor and prime minister, drew up a note, to be approved of by the other great powers, containing a project of pacification for the insurgent districts. And in her turn Turkey, at the instance of that great Northern power which is, as we all know, ever sensitive in the cause of humanity, provided the victims be neither Poles nor Jews, had published a firman, granting concessions to her Christian subjects.

Whilst Europe was thus being agitated, Mr. Disraeli took the precaution to secure the safety of our high-road to India. The Khedive of Egypt had been leading the customary luxurious and extravagant life of an Oriental prince; and after having indulged in

every pleasure and in gratifying every passing fancy, he woke up one morning to find himself on the verge of bankruptcy. Life without his palaces, his women, his yachts, his Italian singers and French theatres, would be worthless in his own eyes; money therefore he must have. When the Suez canal was completed, out of the 400,000 original shares into which the undertaking was divided, the Khedive held nearly half—176,000—of the number. These shares were now in the market; and Mr. Disraeli at once availed himself of the opportunity to let England have a dominant influence in the affairs of the Suez canal, and bought them on behalf of the government for £4,000,000 sterling. Never, since the day when Canning, by a bold and sudden stroke of policy, secured the Danish fleet, had any personal act of a minister created so much enthusiastic approval. The purchase on all sides was vehemently applauded. It proved that, after the years of humiliation and degradation to which England had been subject under a Liberal administration, there was a statesman at the head of affairs who, in the face of any European complications that might arise, looked to the future, and held in his own hand the key to the path which led to our Indian empire. It proved that the England which had recently been treated with contempt and derision by emperors and German chancellors, was now under the rule of one who declined to be ignored by foreign councils, and whose voice would sternly make itself heard should any settlement be arrived at by foreign powers injurious to English interests. It proved that England was now fully alive to the fact that she was no mere island in a northern sea, only busy with her imports and her exports, but a mighty empire resolved to take her proper place in the future among the leading nations in Europe. It proved that Mr. Disraeli had, what Mr. Gladstone has ever shown himself incapable of creating, a foreign policy.

The purchase of the Suez canal shares was

the first link in that chain of Imperialism which Lord Beaconsfield welded together in order to bar the southward march of Russia. With the command of the canal in our possession, the free passage from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea was assured, no matter what power, in a possible scramble for Turkish territory, might obtain possession of Constantinople. The safety of our Indian empire against Russian aggression was the keystone of the foreign policy which the late Conservative premier desired to see carried out. The control of the canal checkmated the designs of the Muscovite in Europe, whilst the rectification of the Afghan frontier presented a formidable obstacle to any meditated invasion by Russia of our Indian empire. Forewarned was to be forearmed; and the adoption of these two precautionary schemes had long been in course of contemplation by Mr. Disraeli. The embarrassments of the Khedive offered him the opportunity of carrying out his first idea; Lord Beaconsfield had, however, to wait some months before disturbances in Afghanistan enabled him to carry out the second.

To the critical condition of Europe during the close of the year 1875 Mr. Disraeli was fully alive. In his speech at the Mansion House on Lord Mayor's day, he passed in review the various questions which were then agitating the public mind—the decline in trade, consequent upon the inflated commercial prosperity of former years; the tour of the Prince of Wales in India, which was not "a mere journey for pastime or pleasure;" the condition of our colonies; and the sanitary legislation of the past session. "A policy," he said, "that diminishes the death-rate of a great nation is a feat as considerable as any of those decisive battles of the world that generally decide nothing." But the words which were listened to with the deepest interest were those which touched upon the situation in eastern Europe. "It would be affectation to deny," he said, "that a partial revolt in a province of European Turkey has brought about a state of affairs

which, in that part of the world, very often becomes critical. In the present instance the wise forbearance of the great powers immediately interested in the question—a wise forbearance to which I beg to offer my sincere testimony, and which cannot be too highly appreciated—produced an effect so happy that at one moment, some months ago, we had a right to believe that this serious disturbance would immediately cease. An unfortunate event, which I will not dwell upon—the financial catastrophe of one of our allies—revived the expiring struggle, gave a new aspect to all the circumstances, and created hopes and fears in quarters and in circles which before that did not exist. It is impossible to deny that circumstances of this character are critical, but for my own part I have still great confidence in that forbearance to which I

have referred. I believe that it will continue to be exercised; and I have myself not only a trust but a conviction, that means will be ascertained which will bring about a satisfactory result—a result which will be consistent with the maintenance of peace, and which will be satisfactory to the public opinion of Europe. My Lord Mayor, I will not contemplate any other result, and therefore I will only say that the interests which the imperial powers have in this question no doubt are more direct than those of Great Britain; but though more direct they are not more considerable, and those to whom the conduct of your affairs is now intrusted are deeply conscious of the nature and magnitude of those British interests, and those British interests they are resolved to guard and to maintain.”

CHAPTER XII.

IMPERIALISM.

THE prophecy which Mr. Disraeli had uttered at the memorable banquet held at the Guildhall, that the following year would witness important events in the East, was now being terribly fulfilled. The situation was daily becoming more critical. The insurrection in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina was spreading, and promised to be maintained with vigour. In spite of the remonstrances of England, the insurgents were receiving support from Serbia and Montenegro, and from various Austrian subjects. It was the wish of our foreign office that Turkey should deal with the revolt herself, and not give it an international importance by appealing to the great powers. The Porte was, however, too incompetent and impoverished to act upon these instructions; and as Turkish inefficiency and exhaustion became more and more apparent, it was suggested that consuls from the different powers should visit the disturbed districts, and obtain from the rebels themselves a statement of the grievances complained of. To this proposition England was at first averse. Lord Derby, however, finally consented, "with reluctance;" still thinking that "the Porte should have dealt with the insurgents without foreign intervention." The mission of the consuls was not attended with success. Turkey was lavish in promises of reform, but these the rebels declined to accept unless they were accompanied by European guarantees.

The next step in the proceedings was the publication of the famous "Andrassy Note." In this much-criticised document, Austria, Germany, and Russia complained that none of the reforms which Turkey had so often pledged herself to carry

out had been effected, and that it was now necessary to urge collective action by the Great Powers, so as to compel the Porte to redress the abuses which had given rise to the present discontent. The Ottoman empire was then requested to comply with the following demands:—The revenue derived from Bosnia and Herzegovina by indirect taxation was to be applied as heretofore to the general purposes of the Ottoman empire; the income, however, to be obtained by direct taxation was to be spent on the provinces themselves. Complete religious liberty was to be established. The system of farming the taxes was to be abolished. Since the Mohammedans owned much of the land, and the Christians tilled it, the state was to be called upon to sell portions of its waste lands to the peasantry on easy terms. The carrying out of these reforms was to be intrusted to the care of a special commission, composed half of Christians and half of Mohammedans. "It was clear," concluded Count Andrassy, who had drawn up the note on account of his intimate knowledge of Turkey, and who had no wish to see a Slav rebellion spreading on the borders of the Slavonic provinces of Austria, "that the Turkish forces had not succeeded in putting an end to the disturbances. All the Christian populations believed that the spring would bring them reinforcements from Bulgaria, Crete, &c. And it is to be foreseen that the governments of Serbia and Montenegro, which at present have great difficulty in holding aloof from the movement, will be unable to resist the current; and the present force of public opinion in their countries has prepared them to take speedy part in the struggle."

This note was dated "Buda-Pesth, December 30, 1875," and was at once communicated to the powers which had signed the treaties of 1856. France and Italy, without delay, agreed to the terms it contained; after some hesitation England consented to give it "a general support." "The proposals of Count Andrassy," wrote Lord Derby, "amount to little more than that the measures for the improvement of the condition of the non-Mussulman and rural populations generally throughout the empire, which have been publicly proclaimed, should be brought into practical application. Some of these measures do not affect the Christian subjects of the Porte alone, but would benefit the whole population alike. . . . Her Majesty's government do not, therefore, consider that the proposals of Count Andrassy conflict with the ninth article of the treaty of Paris; they look on them as being in the nature of suggestions or recommendations for adoption by the Porte in its endeavours to put an end to the insurrection, and as not involving any interference in the relations existing between the Sultan and his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his empire." Lord Derby concluded by urging vigour and promptitude in the execution of the promised reforms. The note was delivered to the Porte, and the Sultan expressed himself as willing to comply with the demands it brought forward. He replied, as he had frequently before replied, that the abuses complained of as existing in the Ottoman empire should be fully redressed.

Such was the state of affairs in the East when the Houses re-assembled at Westminster. The speech from the throne was almost exclusively confined to foreign matters. The relations between England and all foreign powers, it said, continued to be of a cordial character. The shares which had belonged to the Khedive of Egypt in the Suez canal had been purchased, and the government relied upon parliament "to complete a transaction in which the public interests are deeply in-

involved." The hearty affection with which the Prince of Wales had been received throughout India was a proof of the loyalty of that country to the throne. "At the time," said the speech, "that the direct government of my Indian empire was transferred to the crown, no formal addition was made to the style and titles of the sovereign. I have deemed the present a fitting opportunity for supplying this omission, and a bill upon the subject will be presented to you." Then mention was made of the one great question which was attracting such attention. "The insurrectionary movement, which during the last six months has been maintained in the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and which the troops of the Sultan have up to the present time been unable to repress, has excited the attention and interest of the great European powers. I have considered it my duty not to stand aloof from the efforts now being made by allied and friendly governments to bring about a pacification of the disturbed districts; and I have accordingly, while respecting the independence of the Porte, joined in urging on the Sultan the expediency of adopting such measures of administrative reform as may remove all reasonable cause of discontent on the part of his Christian subjects."

The debate on the address was confined to the two subjects then uppermost in men's minds—the purchase of the canal shares and the Andrassy Note. Mr. Disraeli defended the purchase from the adverse criticisms which a certain section of the Opposition had passed upon it. It had been asked, he said, (February 8, 1876) "whether the government had embarked in that speculation on account of the Eastern question? What member of the government had ever used the words Eastern question with regard to the Suez canal?" "Why sir," he exclaimed, "the relations between the British government and the Suez canal are not relations of yesterday. This is not a subject kept in

obscurity by Her Majesty's government, or the government that has preceded us, who had also some experience of the Suez canal and the nature and value of its property. The interest we felt in the Suez canal had many ramifications. When we acceded to office two years ago, an international commission had only just ceased its labours at Constantinople upon the dues of the Suez canal, and upon the means of ascertaining and maintaining a limit of them, and it had arrived at reasons entirely protested against by the proprietary. What was the state of affairs there? Lord Derby had to deal with them. The proprietary of the canal threatened, and not only threatened but proceeded, to stop the canal. They refused pilots; they threatened to change the signals; they took steps which would have intercepted that mode of intercourse with India. Well, what course did the English take? We appealed to the suzerain, then more powerful on such questions than at present. But it was with extreme difficulty—it was only by exerting our influence at Constantinople, and also at Cairo—by the influence, not only of the suzerain, but of the Khedive himself, that the mischief was prevented. And how was it prevented? Why, affairs had got to such a point that a force of 10,000 men was ordered to the scene of action; and it was only at the last moment that the proprietary of the canal gave up their hostile operations, but under protest—protest still continually renewed—calling upon the Porte as suzerain to re-imburse and compensate them for the losses which they had experienced by adopting the tariff forced upon them. From that moment it became a matter of interest, to those responsible for the government of this country, to see what could be done to remedy those relations with the Suez canal. It was a matter of immense difficulty, but still it was not neglected by the government; for during that period, on more than one occasion, M. Lesseps came over here himself, and entered into communication

with us as he had before with our predecessors, but there was no possible means of coming to any settlement which would be satisfactory to the proprietary.

"Now, what was the peculiar influence—a very transitory influence, but still an influence—by which we managed to bring about a tolerable state of affairs? Why, it was the influence of the suzerain and the Khedive—principally, of course, of the Khedive. We found him, as governments of England have generally found him, a faithful ally; one disposed favourably to consider every fair claim of this country. It was the influence of the Khedive, who was proprietor of a moiety, certainly of two-fifths of the shares, that counteracted the dissatisfied spirit of the proprietary. But it suddenly comes to our knowledge that the Khedive, on whose influence we mainly depended, is going to part with his shares. We received a telegram from Cairo informing us that the Khedive was anxious to raise a considerable sum of money on his shares in the Suez canal, and offered them to England. We considered the question immediately, and it appeared to us to be a complicated transaction—one to which there were several objections, and we sent back to say that we were favourably disposed to assist the Khedive, but that at the same time we were only prepared to purchase the shares outright. What was the answer? The answer was that the Khedive was resolved, if he possibly could, to keep his shares, and that he could only therefore avail himself of a loan. There matters seemed to end. Then suddenly there came news to the government of this country that a French Society, the *Société Générale*, was prepared to offer to the Khedive a large sum of money, very little inferior to the £4,000,000, but on very onerous conditions. The Khedive communicated with us, and said the conditions were so severe that he would sooner sell the shares outright, and, which I had forgotten to mention, that in deference to his promise that England should always have the refusal

of the shares if he decided to sell them, he offered them to the English government.

"It was absolutely necessary to decide at that moment what course we should take. It was not a thing on which we could hesitate. We knew that on the 20th of November there was a French society who was prepared—I say nothing about the terms, but they were severer than ours—to give the Khedive nearly £4,000,000 for his shares. Now, I must call the attention of the House to a remarkable diplomatic scene. The papers will, no doubt, be laid on the table of the House; but I quote from the French despatches in the Yellow Book placed upon the table of the French assembly. On November 20th it was believed in France that this French society had got the shares, and the French minister, M. Gavard, owing to the absence of the French ambassador, was absolutely intrusted to call upon Lord Derby—I do not say for the purpose of pumping him—but to sound him whether England would tolerate the purchase of those shares by the French society in question; and Lord Derby spoke with the utmost frankness on the subject. He said it was a very grave point; that he did not think England would view with favour the whole of the Khedive's shares passing to the French company; that while we accorded to M. Lesseps the glory of this great work, and did not want the shares ourselves, we should be very glad if the Khedive retained his shares and that things had gone on quietly, as we should have trusted to his just management. But, said Lord Derby, if you come to us for our opinion as to what the feelings of England would be in respect to the purchase of all those shares by France, I will frankly tell you that she would consider such a result as a calamity, and I certainly could not look with approval upon the accomplishment of such an arrangement. Well, on the 27th of November the French ambassador, the Marquis d'Harcourt, returned to England and called on Lord Derby upon the same subject, the Suez canal shares of

the Khedive; and it was to ask an explanation why England had bought them, and what was the intention of England in so doing. Therefore within those seven days, between the 30th and the 27th, all those various phases had occurred in the transaction, and during that period, having had only forty-eight hours, we did arrive at our decision.

"Lord Derby told the French ambassador why we had decided. He said we should have been very well pleased if the thing had remained as it was; but that England could not see with satisfaction all those shares in the hands of one company, and that therefore he had taken the step he had come to inquire about. To pretend that Lord Derby has treated this business as a mere commercial speculation, as has been stated, is idle. If he did not act in accordance with the principles of high policy, I should like to know what high policy is; and how a man can pursue it. Apart from looking upon this as an investment, if the shares had been offered, and if there had been no arrangement of paying interest for nineteen years, so far as I am concerned, I should have been in favour of the purchase of the shares. I should have agreed with Lord Derby in thinking that England would never be satisfied if all the shares of the Suez canal were possessed by a foreign company. Then, it is said, if any obstacles had been put in your way by the French proprietors of the canal, you know very well that ultimately it must come to force, and you will then obtain at once the satisfaction you desire. Well, if the government of the world was a mere alternation between abstract right and overwhelming force, I agree there is a good deal in that observation; but that is not the way in which the world is governed. The world is governed by conciliation, compromise, influence, varied interests, the recognition of the rights of others, coupled with the assertion of one's own; and in addition, a general conviction, resulting from explanation and good understanding, that it is for

the interest of all parties that matters should be conducted in a satisfactory and peaceful manner."

Mr. Disraeli then defended himself from the charge that he had substituted a different Eastern policy from that which was the ancient policy of England. "I utterly deny that," he said. "The policy of England in that part of the world is much more simple than would be suspected from the cloudy descriptions of it which one sometimes encounters. *England is a Mediterranean power; a great Mediterranean power.* This is shown by the fact that in time of war always, and frequently in time of peace, she has the greatest force upon those waters. Furthermore, she has strongholds upon those waters which she will never relinquish. *The policy of England, however, is not one of aggression.* It is not provinces she wants. She will not interest herself in the redistribution of territory on the shores of the Mediterranean, as long as that redistribution does not imperil the freedom of the seas and the dominion which she legitimately exercises. And therefore I look upon this, that in the great chain of fortresses which we possess, almost from the metropolis to India, that the Suez canal is a means of securing the free intercourse of the waters—is a great addition to that security, and one we should prize."

With regard to the conduct of the government in agreeing to support the Austrian Note, no opposition was expressed. In that matter all considered that ministers had acted soundly and sensibly, whatever might be the consequences which attended upon the issue of the epistle. It was felt that had England, in the face of the sanction of the other powers, refused to recommend the Porte to give a favourable consideration to the demands of the Andrassy Note, she would have placed herself in a position of isolation which it was not desirable for the country to take. By refusing her sanction she would also have incurred a great responsibility by suggesting

resistance to Turkey, and perhaps have been involved in complications which would not have been conducive to the maintenance of peace. It was therefore universally admitted throughout the country that ministers had acted with discretion; it was felt that it would certainly have been imprudent, under such isolated circumstances, to have supported the Sultan in choosing the question of the government of a small province like Herzegovina as the occasion perhaps of deciding the fate of the Turkish empire. Unless England was prepared to support the Porte in resisting the demands of the powers, she could not offer counsels which might lead to resistance. "It would not do," said Mr. Disraeli, "to counsel the Sultan to reject the Austrian Note, and then, when he found himself opposed to all the powers of Europe, shrink away and say, 'We gave you that advice, but we are not prepared to support you in acting upon it.'" Such craven meanness might be expected from the government which tore up the Black Sea treaty at the bidding of Russia, and signed the Transvaal convention when biting the dust before the Boers, but it was certainly not to be expected from the government which was prepared to throw the gauntlet in the face of Russia rather than accede to the terms of a peace incompatible with honour.

On the House going into committee of supply, a few days after this debate, the purchase of the canal shares was discussed with some acrimony both by Mr. Lowe and Mr. Gladstone. This opposition, however, was ineffectual; and the sum of £4,000,000 was voted without a division. In spite of all the prophecies then freely made to the contrary, the undertaking has proved itself a sound commercial success as well as a brilliant stroke of policy; even Mr. Gladstone has recently been compelled to admit that the transaction has already showed a profit of more than cent per cent.*

* "It is in the recollection of the House that 176,000 odd shares in the Suez canal were purchased in 1875 by the government, and that the price given for them was

The first move towards the consolidation of Mr. Disraeli's Eastern policy had been successfully made; the second was now to be put in operation. The first move secured the command of the highway to India, the second was to strengthen the authority of English sovereignty in India. It will be remembered that in the speech from the throne the following passage occurred:—"At the time that the direct government of my Indian empire was transferred to the crown, no formal addition was made to the style and titles of the sovereign. I have deemed the present a fitting opportunity for supplying this omission; and a bill upon the subject will be presented to you." In the second week of the session that promise was fulfilled. Mr. Disraeli rose (February 17, 1876) to ask leave to introduce a bill which would enable Her Majesty to add to the royal style and titles appertaining to the imperial crown of the United Kingdom and its dependencies. The change contemplated by Her Majesty referred to India. "At the time," he said, "when the government of India was transferred to Her Majesty by the East India Company, who were her trustees, the propriety of some addition of this kind to the royal style and titles was felt by persons of considerable authority in these matters, and was considered by the government of that day, of which I happened to be a member. The proposition was not at that time adopted; but, on the other hand, it was not negatived. There existed circumstances at the time which made us think that it might be premature: but the idea was not relinquished, and it has been one that has often occupied the speculations of those interested in Indian affairs. Since that period—since the transfer of the direct government of India to the queen—the interest felt by the

£4,076,000. That was at the rate of about £23 per share.

. . . It is stated that the present value of Suez canal shares is about £78, and that is a price which has, I believe, been recently obtained. . . . Consequently there may be said to have accrued a gain of £4,750,000 on the purchase of the shares."—*Mr. Gladstone, March 31, 1881.*

people of this country in India has greatly increased. It has become every year deeper and wider. I remember when I first entered this House, now about forty years ago, that there were I believe even members of parliament who looked upon India as a vast country which, generally speaking, was inhabited by a single and by a subjected race. But since then information has been so much diffused among all classes of our countrymen on the subject of India, that even those who have the most ordinary information are now well aware that India is an ancient country of many nations; that it is peopled by various and varying races, differing in origin, in language, in religion, in manners, and in laws—some of them highly gifted and highly civilized, and many of them of rare antiquity. And this vast community is governed, under the authority of the queen, by many sovereign princes, some of whom occupy thrones which were filled by their ancestors when England was a Roman province.

"The presence of the Prince of Wales in India has naturally increased and stimulated this feeling of sympathy in both countries. It is not for me to offer compliments to a prince so near the throne, but in fulfilling a public duty the language of truth may be permitted; and I am sure that I am justified in saying that, throughout this great enterprise, on his part his demeanour and his conduct have been such that he has proved that it is not his birth only which qualifies him for an imperial post. Under all these circumstances we have considered that the time has arrived when the original intention of Her Majesty and her advisers should be carried into effect; and I have therefore to ask the House to-night to introduce a bill which consists of only one clause, which will enable Her Majesty, by proclamation, to make that addition to her style and titles which befits the occasion. In taking this course I am following a precedent, the validity of which I think

cannot be impugned. At the time of the union with Ireland, in the Act of Union itself, there was a proviso enabling the sovereign, when the Act was passed, to announce by proclamation under the great seal the style and title he would assume; and accordingly His Majesty, King George III., issued a proclamation under the great seal, and adopted the title of King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and its dependencies. I propose, in the present instance, to take the same course. I have to ask the House to-night to give me leave to bring in a bill which will enable Her Majesty to exercise her high prerogative, and to proclaim the addition to her style and title which she deems expedient and proper. I trust that the House will support Her Majesty's government in the course they are adopting; because we have reason to feel that it is a step which will give great satisfaction, not merely to the princes, but to the nations of India. They look forward to some act of this kind with intense interest, and by various modes they have conveyed to us their desire that such a policy should be pursued. I cannot myself doubt that it is one also that will be agreeable to the people of the United Kingdom; because they must feel that such a step gives a seal, as it were, to that sentiment which has long existed, and the strength of which has been increased by time, and that is the unanimous determination of the people of this country to retain our connection with the Indian empire. And it will be an answer to those mere economists and those foreign diplomatists who announce that India is to us only a burden or a danger. By passing this bill then, and enabling Her Majesty to take this step, the House will show, in a manner that is unmistakable, that they look upon India as one of the most precious possessions of the crown, and their pride that it is a part of her empire and governed by her imperial title."

At the very outset this remark attracted the notice of the opposition. Mr.

Lowe was the most truculent and outspoken in his hostility to the measure. He wished to know what was meant by "imperial," and what was implied by the word "empress." The notion of the crown of England being an imperial crown was, he said, a very old one. At the time when Henry VIII. had his quarrel with the court of Rome, two successive Acts, declaring the crown to be an imperial one, were passed. That declaration was reiterated when James I. succeeded to the crown of England and Scotland; and it was again reiterated in the year 1800, when the union between Great Britain and Ireland was effected. It was, therefore, perfectly well established that the crown of the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, and Ireland was an imperial one. Yet what signified an imperial crown? It simply signified in England, explained Mr. Lowe, that the sovereign was as supreme in this kingdom as an emperor was in his, and was not subject to any potentate on the earth. That being the meaning, what was the state of the case with regard to India? Was not India precisely in the position of an imperial crown? There was nobody else who could set up any claim of supremacy over Her Majesty, who held the uncontrolled and undivided sovereignty of India. Why, then, should Her Majesty be called Queen of England and Empress of India when the two titles signified the same thing? The title of emperor implied that he is one who has gained his power by the sword, and that he holds it by the sword. Was it therefore wise and prudent, Mr. Lowe asked, in dealing with a country like Hindustan, to make a marked distinction between the two countries by giving to Her Majesty in England a title which implied obedience to law, and in India a title which implied the supremacy of force? The title of empress was associated with the idea of violence and despotism; the title of king or queen had no such suggestion attached to it. Suppose Her Majesty assumed the title of Empress of India, were there any danger

a title would be permanent? They might lose India, and then how would the parliament of the day feel when they came to alter the style and to blot out India from the titles of an English sovereign? Again, would not the colonies feel jealous at the distinction conferred upon India? If Her Majesty was to be Empress of India, why was she also not to be Empress of Australia? Mr. Lowe then concluded by expressing his warm disapproval of the measure, and hoped that if his surmise was correct, and the title to be conferred upon the queen was that of Empress of India, the whole question would be reconsidered by the government, and placed in such a form as to be acceptable to the House.

Mr. Disraeli at once replied to these flimsy objections. He was not surprised, he said, that Mr. Lowe, as the basis of his argument, should have contemplated that India one day would cease to belong to England. Mr. Lowe was, however, the only member in the House who would have offered an argument of that kind. Mr. Lowe was a prophet, but he was always a prophet of evil. "Whether retaining our rule in India, or attacking a war in Abyssinia, I am always prepared to hear from the right hon. gentleman a prophecy of the dark-coming fortunes of this prosperous country." Then, as to the statement that neither Lord Palmerston nor the late Lord Derby had attempted to make any addition to the titles of the queen, the reason given by Mr. Disraeli was unanswerable—the Indian mutiny stood in the way. "Why, when our swords were reeking with carnage in terminating a mutiny of almost unequalled magnitude, that certainly was not a period when we could advise Her Majesty to make any addition to her titles." He denied that the colonies could be aggrieved by the proposed title, because the colonies were contained in Great Britain and Ireland. "Therefore, as to the alleged slur, I think, on the contrary, it would be a slur to introduce the names of the colonies into the bill. It would be a slur to tell Australia and Canada, and

the men of New Zealand, 'You are to create a specific title for the sovereign, and are not to rank amongst the population of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.'" The bill was brought in, he asserted, because it would gratify the native princes, would be pleasing to the many millions of people who in India obey the rule of the queen, and because it was a matter of high policy that the step should be taken. He hoped therefore, concluded Mr. Disraeli, that permission would be accorded him to introduce the bill. The motion was then agreed to, and the bill read a first time.

Some objection was raised by a few members at being asked to give their sanction to a measure the nature of which was not wholly disclosed. In the event of the passing of the royal titles bill, by what title would Her Majesty be known? Would she be styled Queen of India, Empress of India, or what? This question Mr. Disraeli, for constitutional reasons, then declined to answer. The time for the second reading of the bill was rapidly approaching, and Mr. Samuelson, the member for Banbury, therefore gave notice that on the motion for the second reading he would move, "That this House should not be asked to read this bill a second time until the addition proposed to be made to the royal titles shall have been stated by Her Majesty's ministers, and until full opportunity shall have been given for the consideration of such addition."

The day for the second reading of the bill was fixed for March 9, 1876. In moving the second reading, Mr. Disraeli began his speech by referring to the notice of Mr. Samuelson. He thought that the notice was unfair and improper. "The question was," he said, "whether I was prepared to inform the House of the title which Her Majesty would be advised to adopt with respect to the matter contained in the bill before us, and my answer was, that I was not then prepared to give the information to the House. It appeared to me that that appeal, as I ventured to remark,

was unfair and improper, because, in the first place, on a controversial matter, it required me to make a statement respecting which I could offer no argument, as the wise rules of this House, as regards questions and answers, are established. I should, therefore, have had to place before the House, on a matter respecting which there is controversy, the decision of the government, at the same time being incapacitated from offering any argument in favour of it. I thought the question was improper, also, in the second place, because it was a dealing with the royal prerogative that, to say the least, was wanting, as I thought, in respect. Both sides of the House agree that we are ruled by a strictly constitutional sovereign. But the constitution has invested Her Majesty with prerogatives of which she is wisely jealous, which she exercises always with firmness, but ever, when the feelings and claims of parliament are concerned, with the utmost consideration. It is the more requisite, therefore, that we should treat these prerogatives with the greatest respect, not to say reverence. In the present case, if Her Majesty had desired to impart to the House of Commons information which the House required, the proper time would certainly be when the bill in question was under the consideration of the House. It would be more respectful to the House, as well as to the queen, that such a communication should be made when the House was assembled to discuss the question before them; and such information ought not to be imparted, I think, in answer to the casual inquiry of an individual member.

"From the beginning there has been no mystery at any time upon this matter. So far as the government are concerned they have acted strictly according to precedent, and it has not been in my power until the present evening to impart any information to the House upon the subject on which they intimated a wish to be informed. But, upon the first night, when I introduced this bill, I did say, alluding to the prerogative

of the queen, and Her Majesty's manner of exercising that prerogative, that I did not anticipate difficulties upon the subject. To this point, in the course of the few observations I have to make, I shall recur; but, before doing so, I shall make some remarks upon the objections which have been made to a title which it has been gratuitously assumed that Her Majesty, with respect to her dominions in India, wishes to adopt. It is a remarkable circumstance that all those who have made objections on this subject, have raised their objections to one particular title alone. One alone has occurred to them—which *primâ facie* is rather an argument in favour of its being an apposite title. No doubt other objections have been urged in the debate, and I will refer to them before proceeding to the other part of my remarks. It has been objected that the title of emperor and empress denotes military dominion; that it has never or rarely been adopted but by those who have obtained dominion by the sword, retained it by the sword, and governed by the sword; and, to use the words of a right hon. gentleman [Mr. Lowe] who took part in the recent debate, 'Sentiment clothes the title of emperor with bad associations.'

"Now, the House must at once feel what vague and shadowy arguments—if they can be called arguments—are these: 'Sentiment clothes the title of emperor with bad associations.' I very much doubt whether sentiment does clothe the title of emperor with bad associations. I can remember, and many gentlemen can remember, the immortal passage of the greatest of modern historians [Gibbon], where he gives his opinion that the happiness of mankind was never so completely assured or so long a time maintained as in the age of the Antonines, and the Antonines were emperors. The right hon. gentleman may be of opinion that an imperial title is a modern invention, and its associations to him may be derived from a limited experience, of which he may be proud. But when so

large a principle is laid down by one distinguished for his historical knowledge, that 'Sentiment clothes the title of emperor with bad associations,' I may be allowed to vindicate what I believe to be the truth upon this matter. Then a second objection was urged: it was said, 'This is a clumsy periphrasis in which you are involving the country, if you have not only royal but imperial majesties.' Now, the right hon. gentleman who made the remark, ought to have recollected that there would be no clumsy periphrasis of the kind. The majesty of England requires for its support no epithet. The queen is not Her Royal Majesty. The queen is described properly as Her Majesty. Therefore the clumsy periphrasis of 'Royal and Imperial' Majesty could never occur.

"There is, however, a stronger and more important objection which has been brought to this title of empress. Put briefly and concisely it is this—that we diminish the supremacy of the queenly title by investing Her Majesty, though only locally, with an imperial dignity. I deny that any imperial dignity is superior to the queenly title, and I defy anyone to prove the reverse; yet I hear and read every day of an intention to invest Her Majesty with a title superior to that which she has inherited from an illustrious line of ancestors. It is necessary, therefore, to notice this statement. In times which will guide us in any way upon such a subject, I doubt whether there is any precedent of an emperor ranking superior to a crowned head, unless that crowned head was his avowed feudatory. I will take the most remarkable instance of imperial sway in modern history. When the Holy Roman Empire existed, and the German emperor was crowned at Rome and called Caesar, no doubt the princes of Germany, who were his feudatories, acknowledged his supremacy, whatever might be his title.

"But in those days there were great kings—there were kings of France, and kings of Spain, and kings of England—

they never acknowledged the supremacy of the head of the Holy Roman Empire; and the origin, I have no doubt, of the expression of the Act of Henry VIII., where the crown of England is described as an imperial crown, was the determination of that eminent monarch that at least there should be no mistake upon the subject between himself and the Emperor Charles V. These may be considered antiquarian illustrations, and I will not dwell upon them, but will take more recent cases at a time when the intercourse of nations and of courts was regulated by the same system of diplomacy which now prevails. Upon this question, then, I say there can be no mistake, for it has been settled by the assent, and the solemn assent, of Europe. In the middle of the last century a remarkable instance occurred which brought to a crisis this controversy, if it were a point of controversy. When Peter the Great emerged from his anomalous condition as a powerful sovereign—hardly recognized by his brother sovereigns—he changed the style and title of his office from that of Czar to Emperor. That addition was acknowledged by England, and by England alone. The rulers of Russia as emperors remained unrecognized by the great comity of nations; and after Peter the Great they still continued to bear the titles of Czar and Czarina; for more than one female sovereign flourished in Russia about the middle of the century. In 1745, Elizabeth, Czarina of Russia, having by her armies and her councils interfered considerably in the affairs of Europe—probably (though I am not sure of this) influenced by the circumstance that the first congress of Aix la Chapelle, in the middle of last century, was about to meet—announced to her allies and to her brother sovereigns that she intended in future to take the title of empress, instead of Czarina. Considerable excitement and commotion were caused at all the courts and in all the governments of Europe in consequence of this announcement; but the new title was recognized on condition that

Her Majesty should at the same time write a letter, called in diplomatic language a reversal, acknowledging that she thereby made no difference in the etiquette and precedence of the European courts, and would only rank upon terms of equality with the other crowned heads of Europe. Upon these terms France, Spain, Austria, and Hungary admitted the Empress of Russia into their equal society.

"For the next twenty years, under Peter III., there were discussions on the subject; but he also gave a reversal, disclaiming superiority to other crowned heads in taking the title of emperor. When Catherine II. came to the throne, she objected to write this reversal, as being inconsistent with the dignity of a crowned sovereign; and she herself issued an edict to her own subjects, announcing, on her accession, her rank, style, and title; and distinctly informing her subjects that, though she took that style and title, she only wished to rank with the other sovereigns of Europe. I should say that the whole of the diplomatic proceedings of the world from that time have acknowledged that result, and there can be no question on the subject. There was an attempt at the congress of Vienna to introduce the subject of the classification of sovereigns; but the difficulties of the subject were acknowledged by Prince Metternich, by Lord Castlereagh, and by all the eminent statesmen of the time; the subject was dropped; the equality of crowned heads was again acknowledged, and the mode of precedence of their representatives at the different courts was settled by an alphabetical arrangement, or by the date of their arrival and letters of credit to that court, at once and for ever. The question of equality between those sovereigns who styled themselves emperors and those who were crowned heads of ancient kingdoms, without reference to population, revenue, or extent of territory, was established and permanently adopted.

"Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman the member for Glasgow [Mr. Anderson]

said the other day, 'If empress means nothing more than queen, why should you have empress? If it means something else, then I am against adopting it.' Well, I have proved to you that it does not mean anything else. Then, why should you adopt it? Well, that is one of those questions which, if pursued in the same spirit and applied to all the elements of society, might resolve it into its original elements. The amplification of titles is no new system, no new idea; it has marked all ages, and has been in accordance with the manners and customs of all countries. The amplification of titles is founded upon a great respect for local influences, for the memory of distinguished deeds and passages of interest in the history of countries. *It is only by the amplification of titles that you can often touch and satisfy the imagination of nations; and that is an element which governments must not despise.* Well, then, it is said that if this title of empress is adopted, it would be un-English. But why un-English? I have sometimes heard the ballot called un-English, and indignant orators on the other side have protested against the use of an epithet of that character which nobody could define, and which nobody ought to employ. I should like to know why the title is un-English.

"A gentleman the other day, referring to this question now exciting parliament and the country, recalled to the recollection of the public the dedication of one of the most beautiful productions of the English muse to the sovereign of this country; and speaking of the age distinguished by an Elizabeth, by a Shakespeare, and by a Bacon, he asked whether the use of the word *empress*, applied by one who was second in his power of expression and in his poetic resources only to Shakespeare himself, in the dedication of an immortal work to Queen Elizabeth was not, at least, an act which proved that the word and the feeling were not un-English? Then, of course, it was immediately answered by those who criticised the illustration that

this was merely the fancy of a poet. But I do not think it was the fancy of a poet. The fancy of the most fanciful of poets was exhausted in the exuberant imagination which idealised his illustrious sovereign as the 'Faëry Queen.' He did not call her empress then—he called her the 'Faëry Queen.' But when his theme excited the admiration of royalty—when he had the privilege of reciting some of his cantos to Queen Elizabeth, and she expressed a wish that the work should be dedicated to her—then Spencer had, no doubt, to consult the friends in whom he could confide as to the style in which he should approach so solemn an occasion, and win to himself still more the interest of his illustrious sovereign. He was a man who lived among courtiers and statesmen. He had as friends Sidney and Raleigh; and I have little doubt that it was by the advice of Sidney and Raleigh that he addressed his sovereign as Empress, 'The Queen of England, of Ireland, and of Virginia,' the hand of Sir Walter Raleigh being probably shown in the title of the Queen of Virginia; and it is not at all improbable that Elizabeth herself, who possessed so much literary taste, and who prided herself upon improving the phrases of the greatest poet, revised the dedication. That example clearly shows that the objection of this assumed adoption by Her Majesty of the title of empress as un-English could hardly exist in an age when the word was used with so much honour—in an age of 'words which wise Bacon and brave Raleigh spake.'*

"I think it is obvious from these remarks, made upon the assumption that the title which Her Majesty would be pleased to adopt by her proclamation would be 'Empress,' that the title would be one to which there could be no objection. I am empowered, therefore, to say that the title

would be 'Empress,' and that Her Majesty would be 'Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, and Empress of India.' Now, I know it may be said—it was said at a recent debate and urged strongly by the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford [Mr. W. E. Forster]—that in this addition to Her Majesty's style, and in this addition alone, we are treating without consideration the colonies. I cannot in any way concur in that opinion. No one honours more than myself the colonial empire of England; no one is more anxious to maintain it. No one regrets more than I do that favourable opportunities have been lost of identifying the colonies with the royal race of England. But we have to deal now with another subject, and one essentially different from the colonial condition. The condition of India and the condition of the colonies have no similarity. In the colonies you have, first of all, a fluctuating population; a man is member of parliament, it may be, for Melbourne this year, and next year he is member of parliament for Westminster. A colonist finds a nugget, or he fleeces a thousand flocks. He makes a fortune. He returns to England; he buys an estate; he becomes a magistrate; he represents Majesty; he becomes high sheriff: he has a magnificent house near Hyde Park; he goes to court, to *levées*, to drawing-rooms; he has an opportunity of plighting his troth personally to his sovereign: he is in frequent and direct communication with her. But that is not the case with the inhabitant of India.

"The condition of colonial society is of a fluctuating character. Its political and social elements change. I remember, twenty years ago, a distinguished statesman who willingly would have seen a Dukedom of Canada. But Canada has now no separate existence. It is called the 'Dominion,' and includes several other provinces. There is no similarity between the circumstances of our colonial fellow-subjects in India.

* "I was interested in observing that in Camden's 'Britannia'—in the first English translation from the original Latin—it is described as 'The true and Royal History of the famous Empress Elizabeth, Queen of England.' So at any rate Camden as well as Spenser may be quoted as authority on that point." *Mr. Disraeli, March 28, 1876.*

Our colonists are English ; they come, they go, they are careful to make fortunes, to invest their money in England ; their interests in this country are immense, ramified, complicated, and they have constant opportunities of improving and employing the relations which exist between themselves and their countrymen in the metropolis. Their relations to the sovereign are ample ; they satisfy them. The colonists are proud of those relations ; they are interested in the titles of the queen ; they look forward to return when they leave England ; they do return ; in short, they are Englishmen.

" Now let me say one word, before I move the second reading of this bill, upon the effect it may have upon India. It is not without consideration, it is not without the utmost care, it is not until after the deepest thought, that we have felt it our duty to introduce this bill into parliament. It is desired in India ; it is anxiously expected. The princes and nations of India, unless we are deceived, and we have omitted no means by which we could obtain information and form opinions, look to it with the utmost interest. They know exactly what it means, though there may be some hon. members in this House who do not. They know in India what this bill means, and they know that what it means is what they wish. I do myself most earnestly impress upon the House to remove prejudice from their minds, and to pass the second reading of this bill without a division. Let not our divisions be misconstrued. Let the people of India feel that there is a sympathetic chord between us and them, and do not let Europe suppose for a moment that there are any in this House who are not deeply conscious of the importance of our Indian empire. Unfortunate words have been heard in the debate upon this subject, but I will not believe that any member of this House seriously contemplates the loss of our Indian empire. I trust, therefore, that the House will give to this bill a second reading without a division. By permission

of the queen I have communicated, on the part of my colleagues, the intention of Her Majesty, which she will express in her proclamation. If you sanction the passing of this bill, it will be an act, to my mind, that will add splendour even to her throne, and security even to her empire."

As on the first reading of the bill Mr. Lowe was its bitterest opponent, so on the second reading Mr. Gladstone, who occasionally troubled Lord Hartington's leadership by his spasmodic appearances and passionate utterances, was the most hostile to the measure. He was in favour, he said, of the motion brought forward by Mr. Samuelson. The bill had been introduced by Mr. Disraeli with comments which were misleading. The House of Commons had nothing whatever to do with the prerogative of the crown, and had no intention of putting pressure upon the prime minister so as to interfere with that prerogative. Statute and prerogative were logically exclusive of one another. The prerogative of the crown did not require and did not depend on statute ; the statutory power conferred on the crown had no relation to or concern with prerogative. The question before the House was as to the policy of conferring any statutory power upon the crown with respect to its royal style and title, and the question was what that power should be, and how it should be used. Mr. Gladstone next proceeded to argue that the prime minister had no precedent for his proceedings, and denied that there had been any desire on the part of India to place upon the brow of the queen an imperial diadem. Then the ex-leader of the Opposition, who, however, assumed the leadership whenever it so pleased him, indulged in one of those verbal quibbles so dear to his heart. He denied that the government of India—that was the entire India—had ever yet by statute been vested in the queen. The Act for the government of India provided that " the government of the territories now in the possession, or under the government of the East India

Company," should be vested in Her Majesty and exercised in her name. Not all India therefore, but only those countries which had been held in trust by the East India Company for the crown, had been vested in Her Majesty. There were important princes and states in India over which England never assumed dominion, yet by the meditated bill she was now to assume that dominion. Was such a step wise, he inquired? He had no wish to see the title borne by Her Majesty, so rich in interest and in associations, absorbed in the style and title of empress. Whenever the two titles had come into competition, the title of king had been either subordinated to, or had been swallowed up in the title of emperor. Moreover, the title of emperor was elective and not hereditary, and it assumed absolute authority. Mr. Gladstone concluded by begging the government to seriously reconsider the matter, and not deal hurriedly with so important a question.

The hostility of the Opposition was, however, of little avail. On a division, the motion of Mr. Samuelson was rejected by a large majority—Ayes, 31; Noes, 284. The bill was then read a second time and committed.

The progress of the bill in committee was at once barred by Lord Hartington, who, at the very outset of the proceedings, moved the following amendment:—"That while willing to consider a measure enabling Her Majesty to make an addition to the royal style and title, which shall include such dominions of Her Majesty as to Her Majesty may seem meet, this House is of opinion that it is inexpedient to impair the ancient and royal dignity of the crown by the assumption of the style and title of emperor." The amendment led to a very interesting debate, during which both sides of the question were fairly and fully discussed. According to the Liberals, the proposed title of empress was as unpopular in England as it was in India; the innovation was as unnecessary as it was uncalled for; it would not increase the loyalty of India,

whilst it would excite the jealousy of the colonies; if a new title must be invented, why not call Her Majesty "sovereign lady," or "lady paramount," or any title save that of empress, which was peculiarly disagreeable to English ears? Then followed much historical and antiquarian talk, manufactured for the occasion, upon the origin of the style and title of emperor, and the power such title conveyed.

On the other hand, the Conservative party cordially approved of the measure. It was very desirable, they asserted, that some step should be taken to mark the imperial character of English rule in India; in governing an eastern nation it was right that the queen should hold a title which would impress an oriental race with the absolute sovereignty she wielded. Because Her Majesty would be Empress of India she would be none the less Queen of Great Britain, just as the Prince of Wales was none the less prince because he was also Duke of Cornwall. The title of queen would not accurately represent the relations which Her Majesty bore to the states which were governed by their own native princes; it meant at once too much and too little—too much, because it would seem to imply that Her Majesty had some direct concern in the government of such a state as that of Indore or Gwalior; too little, because it would fail to convey to the Indian mind that the queen occupied the position of paramount power in India. Then, finally, it was stated that there was nothing new in the title. General Jacob, in his scheme for the improvement of India, had spoken of the queen as Empress of India, Lord Northbrook had used the phrase Empress of Hindostan, and the title was of common occurrence in newspaper articles and periodicals. The views held by the Conservative party gained the day. On a division, the motion of Lord Hartington was rejected by a majority of 105—Ayes, 305; Noes, 200.

During the progress of the bill in committee Mr. Disraeli was careful to correct

a popular notion that had got abroad. It was said that the queen was to be styled empress in England, and that her children would be called imperial instead of royal. "I wish distinctly to state," said Mr. Disraeli, "that there never was an intention on the part of Her Majesty to substitute any title for the superior and supreme title of Her Majesty—namely, that of Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. I am sure that under no circumstances would Her Majesty assume, by the advice of her ministers, the title of empress in England. I wish to make this declaration, because I have reason to believe that considerable error exists on this subject. There is another point on which I should like—and on which it may be desirable that I should on this occasion—to make one or two remarks. It is with reference to a rumour which is very prevalent, that in consequence of the assumption of the imperial title in India by Her Majesty, Her Majesty would be advised to confer titles on her royal children and her agnates that would denote their imperial connection, so that they should be called not only royal but imperial highnesses. Her Majesty's ministers would under no circumstances give such advice to Her Majesty; and there never was the slightest foundation for that rumour. It would be a step entirely disapproved of." This explanation greatly facilitated matters, and the bill passed through committee with but little alteration.

On the occasion of its third reading (March 23, 1876) Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length, refuting the objections of the Opposition, and especially of Mr. Gladstone. He was very sarcastic as to the statement made by Mr. Gladstone that statute and prerogative could not co-exist. "He," laughed Mr. Disraeli, "who carried one of his most important measures by statute and prerogative combined! Beginning by statute, and when the statutory power failed him, having accomplished his purpose to some extent by statute, he ran

to the throne and fetched the royal warrant to complete his work!" Then, in reply to the assertion that the proposed title of empress was unpopular with the nation, since it was considered as unconstitutional and as lowering the dignity of the queen, Mr. Disraeli asked what grounds there were for such a statement? No petitions had been received against it, no public meetings had been held appealing against it, none of the usual machinery of agitation against an unpopular measure had been put in motion. Yet the subject had been before the country for the last five weeks.

"I remember," he said, "asking one of the most sagacious men who ever sat in this House—Mr. Walter, father of one of our colleagues now in the House of Commons, and a gentleman who had great knowledge of the press and of public opinion—I asked him, 'How do you ascertain what is public opinion?' He said, 'Well, the way I ascertain public opinion is this. Petitions may be got up, and meetings may be got up, or the country may feel a great deal without expressing its opinion either by petitions or public meetings; but there is an infallible test, and that is—the post. The way I always know what is the real feeling of the country is by the letter bag.' And it must be borne in mind that Mr. Walter had at that time the conduct of one of the most powerful journals of the country—those journals which it is now the fashion to quote in the House of Commons: it never was done when I first entered it. He said, 'I receive 100 letters a day, and more when there is anything stirring in the country; and I thus understand and find out what is public opinion from the post bag. It is that which tells me what the feeling of the country is, and I know it before petitions or public meetings. They follow it.' Well, I think a minister of state has as many letters as the editor of a newspaper. I have sometimes 100 letters a day, and have had a great many lately. Generally speaking, two-thirds of these refer to the business

before parliament. They sometimes contain very crude, but sometimes very critical and useful hints. The other third consists of what may be called 'crazy correspondence.' Now, I have a letter which I received the day before yesterday, which I will really venture to read to the House because it has a moral. It shows that while we have been discussing with all this learning and argument, and with an entire absence of party feeling, and while we have been listening to the Quixotic denunciations of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, the people out of doors are astonished at our being ignorant of what they thought was well known to everybody.

"My correspondent is a young lady. She is only twelve years of age, so there is nothing compromising to her dignity or my own. Her father was in the House of Commons the other day listening to our debates—I do not of course mention her name, but it is an extremely pretty one. They live a few miles away from London. The young lady asked her father what the debate was about, and he told her the House of Commons was discussing the question whether the Queen of England should be called empress or queen. 'What silly men they must be,' said she, 'I have known that for three years!' 'And how did you know it?' she was asked. 'Why,' she said, 'it is in my geography book.' Upon which she brought the book to her father, who sent it to me by post. Now, this is not a book to be despised, for it is in its eighty-ninth edition. I am informed by the most perfect authority on the subject—namely, the publishers themselves—that there are at least, at this moment, 250,000 copies of it in circulation, educating young people and others. On examining this book what do I find? There is a chapter on India—I will not read it all, but merely give a quotation. 'Hindustan,' it says, 'is in general a flat country,' and so on. And here I beg the House to remember that I am reading from the edition of 1873, which I need not say has not been printed

for the occasion. At paragraph six I read, 'British India is under the dominion of Great Britain. Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, bears there the title of Empress of India.' This was known even in 1873 to this young lady; and probably many people knew it many years ago."*

Mr. Disraeli concluded by alluding to the changes occurring in the very heart of Asia, and to the approach of Russia to our Indian frontiers. "There is a country," he said, "of vast extent which has been known hitherto only by its having sent forth hordes to conquer the world. That country has at last been vanquished; and the frontiers of Russia—I will not say a rival power, but the frontiers of Russia—are only a few days' march from those of Her Majesty's dominions in India. I venture to speak on this subject with some frankness, because I am not of that school who view the advances of Russia in Asia with those deep misgivings that some do. I think that Asia is large enough for the destinies of both Russia and England. But whatever may be my confidence in the destiny of England, I know that empires are only maintained by vigilance, by firmness, by courage, by understanding the temper of the times in which we live, and by watching those significant indications that may easily be observed. The population of India is not the population it was when we carried the bill of 1858. There has been a great change in the habits of the people. That which the press could

* I am permitted to gratify public curiosity. The work alluded to by Mr. Disraeli was the well-known "Guy's Geography," published by Messrs. Allman of Oxford Street. The young lady was a Miss Lilian Constance Craven (as Mr. Disraeli admitted 'an extremely pretty name'). The prime minister asked to keep the book over the third reading of the bill; he then returned it to his fair informant, writing on the fly leaf of the volume, beneath her name, "With thanks.—B. Disraeli. April 5, 1876." Some ridicule was thrown upon this reference to a school-book. Lord Cairns very wisely said, "I think that the public man who throws contempt upon the school-books of the nation may be a man of very keen wit and of a very sharp tongue, but he is not a man of a very great deal of common sense." In spite of the objections of the Opposition, it was also afterwards discovered that the Duke of Argyll, when secretary of state for India in the Gladstone cabinet, had himself altered the wording of a telegram to "Empress of Hindostan."

not do, that which our influence had failed in doing, the introduction of railroads has done; and the people of India move about in a manner which could never have been anticipated, and are influenced by ideas and knowledge which before never reached or touched them. What was the gossip of bazaars is now the conversation of villages. You think they are ignorant of what is going on in Central Asia? You think they are unaware that Tartary, that great conquering power of former times, is now at last conquered? No; not only do they know what has occurred, not only are they well acquainted with the power which has accomplished this great change, but they know well the title of the great prince who has brought about so wonderful a revolution. I have listened with surprise night after night to hon. gentlemen, on both sides of the House, translating the title of empress into all sorts of languages, and indicating to us what name would at last be adopted. The nations and populations that can pronounce the word emperor, and that habitually use it, will not be slow to accept the title of empress. That is the word which will be adopted by the nations and populations of India; and in announcing, as Her Majesty will do by her proclamation, that she adopts that title, confidence will be given to her empire in that part of the world, and it will be spoken in language which cannot be mistaken, that the parliament of England have resolved to uphold the empire of India."

The hope that Mr. Disraeli had expressed, that the bill might pass without a division, was not to be fulfilled. Mr. Cowen and Mr. Lowe followed the prime minister, and in two powerfully hostile speeches, urged the House to record its verdict against the measure. This special pleading was, however, not successful. On a division the royal titles bill was carried by a majority of seventy-five—ayes, 209; noes, 134.

In the Upper House the bill passed its first and second readings without a division, though the Peers were far from unanimous

in approving of the measure. On the third reading Lord Shaftesbury brought forward an amendment, praying that the word empress might not be used. His motion was, however, defeated, and the bill was sent down to the Commons without alteration.

A new objection now made itself felt. Shortly after receiving the royal assent, the proclamation of the new title was made by the sheriffs of London and Middlesex. Ministers had promised that, instead of the tedious process of inserting limitations in the bill itself, the proclamation should itself convey the statement that the title of empress should be localized to India alone. Yet when the proclamation was issued, it was discovered that no such limitation appeared. Upon this omission the Opposition believed they had good grounds to give battle. Sir Henry James accused the government of having broken faith with the nation, and moved a vote of want of confidence on account of the vague terms contained in the proclamation. A lively debate ensued, the result of which was that the government came triumphantly out of the contest. It was proved that ministers had honourably fulfilled their pledges—that Her Majesty was to be Queen in England and Empress in India, and so it was to appear in all public documents. "The queen," said Mr. Disraeli, "would assume the title of empress externally; but for the whole internal government of the United Kingdom it would not be used." The Opposition did not certainly gain much by their move, for a majority of 108 proved that parliament had every confidence in the cabinet, and acknowledged that the language of the proclamation had expressed the declarations of the government.

There can be little doubt, now that the Royal Titles Act has been in force for some years, that the ends Mr. Disraeli had in view have been attained. The title empress, in spite of the fears entertained at the time, has not clashed with or absorbed the royal

style in England, whilst it precisely implies the sovereignty exercised by Her Majesty over our Eastern empire. A large part of India is governed directly as dominions of the crown; but at the same time there are enormous portions governed indirectly by the crown. The title of empress exactly meets the case. The styles once proposed, of "paramount power," "lady paramount," and "sovereign lady," were definitions, but not titles; the style of queen was not sufficiently exhaustive; whilst the word empress, signifying a sovereign who governs not directly, but through other sovereigns, is most appropriate. "The crown of England," wrote Lord Canning, "stands forth the unquestioned ruler and paramount power in all India, and is for the first time brought face to face with its feudatories. There is a reality in the suzerainty of the sovereignty of England which has never existed before, and which is not only felt but eagerly acknowledged by the chiefs." By placing the imperial diadem upon the brow of Her Majesty, all invidious comparisons, which were at one time being freely made by the natives of India between the titles borne by the Czar of Russia and the Queen of England, have been removed; the title has exacted the fealty of the feudatories without causing them to be jealous as to the safety of their territories; it has been hailed with acclamation by the natives, and has tended greatly to consolidate and promote the interests of our Indian empire by more closely associating them with the home government.

In connection with this bill a disgraceful episode occurred, which those who love to see malignant mendacity brought to bitter punishment will not be quick to forget or loath to record. During the Easter recess Mr. Lowe made a speech at East Retford, in which he said, speaking of the queen's change of title, "I strongly suspect that this is not now brought forward for the first time. I violate no confidence, because I have received none; but I am under a

conviction that at least two previous ministers have entirely refused to have anything to do with such a change. More pliant persons have now been found, and I have no doubt the thing will be done." In other words, Mr. Lowe—an ex-cabinet minister, and consequently a privy councillor—in order to vent his spite upon Mr. Disraeli, did not scruple to make an attack upon the first lady of the land by stating that she had made a request, and had been rebuffed, and to accuse two previous ministers of the crown of having broken the oath of secrecy which they had sworn to as privy councillors. It was impossible that such a request could be made known to any third person except either by Her Majesty, who had preferred such request, or by those by whom such request had been refused. How did Mr. Lowe, then, obtain the information upon which he founded his "conviction?" Certainly not from the queen. Then it must have been from the "two previous ministers." Who were these ministers, it was asked, who had been so forgetful of the secrecy to which they had pledged themselves? Could it have been Lord Derby, or Earl Russell, or Lord Palmerston? To such a question there could be but one answer—an indignant negative. Could it be Mr. Disraeli, who had once resisted, but who was now so "pliant?" Scarcely. There was then only Mr. Gladstone left; but Mr. Gladstone, aware of the gravity of the accusation, had written a letter to the public press denying any participation in the matter. "It was rumoured some little time back," wrote the ex-prime minister, "that Her Majesty had been pleased to suggest to two late prime ministers the proposal which has now been embodied in the royal titles bill. To the best of my belief, I was not named as one of them; and for reasons which seem to me important, I thought it better to take no notice of an unauthenticated report, which might at once die away. Further attention has, however, been given to the matter within the last



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